

**TORAH-JUDAISM AND
THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

by
URIEL ZIMMER

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Uriel Zimmer first began writing in the orthodox Jewish Press in 1939 and has since contributed many hundreds of thought-provoking articles throughout the orthodox Press. He has been the editor of the oldest existing Jerusalem Hebrew daily — "Hakol" — for many years and has frequently written for the columns of the "Jewish Post", London, "Der Yid", New York, and "Emounatenu" of Paris.

He is a linguist of renown and has translated some of the writings of Hirsch from German into Hebrew, the essays of Nathan Birnbaum, the poems of de Haan from Dutch into Hebrew, the essays of Jacob Rosenheim from German into English, and the Tanya from Hebrew into Yiddish.

He has travelled widely on the European Continent, including Turkey, and also in Latin-America. In 1946 he visited many of the D.P. camps, and was associated there with active rescue work. He was a co-founder of the first branch of the Agudist Youth Movement in Haifa in 1938.

Uriel Zimmer has had the closest personal contacts with many of the sages and thinkers of independent Orthodoxy, and is *persona grata* with many of the Gedolim of our days. He is closely affiliated with the activities of the "Chabad" (Lubavitch) movement. He was a close friend of the late Rabbi Moshe Blau, Dr. Isaac Breuer and Dr. Pinchas Kohn.

He was born in Vienna in 1921 and settled in Jerusalem in 1934. He is the United Nations correspondent of several newspapers.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this work is to fill a certain gap the results of which are perhaps felt more than the existence of the gap itself.

The problem to be discussed in the following pages, namely, the attitude of Torah-Judaism towards the State of Israel, belongs to that particular type of subject, about which much is said but little is known. It has more than once been a topic of written and oral discussion and even of dispute and polemics, yet—to the knowledge of this writer—very few efforts have hitherto been made towards the definition of this attitude for its own sake, and in a systematic and precise manner. A number of articles on related topics have appeared in various papers and periodicals; ideas connected with it have been expressed during speeches or sermons but only very little, if anything, has ever been compiled and published on the problem itself.

As has been said, the results of this deficiency are more far-reaching than most people might think. The lack of a clearly defined attitude in this matter which, one might say, constitutes today the question of questions for the Jewish public, both in Israel and abroad—causes a confusion of issues both in the camp of Torah observers and even in the non-religious camp. The resulting ignorance is the cause of widespread misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Various events and situations are described and appear in a distorted form. Views are ascribed to 'zealots'

or 'extremists' which are, in fact, the views of believing Judaism at large, etc. On the other hand, this lack of a clear-cut definition often creates a situation, even among the orthodox and even the so-called 'ultra-orthodox', in which minor issues are granted top-priority while essentials are sometimes neglected so that results are mistaken for causes, and vice versa.

This work will, therefore, attempt to formulate basic definitions in this respect.

The attitude of Torah Judaism towards the State of Israel may be defined in three correlated areas: (a) in the area of Halacha-analysis, (b) in that of political analysis, and (c) in that of ideological analysis. These three aspects are interwoven and correlated, and the boundary-lines may sometimes not be clearly established; for, according to Jewish belief, 'there is nothing that is not indicated in the Torah'. The Torah is all-embracing and governs everything—ideology and political life no less than actual "Halacha".

This work will seek to concentrate only on the third aspect.

A Halachic analysis, i.e. a compilation of all Halachic sources, a true explanation and interpretation of the various Talmudic sayings, of the various quotations of our ancient sages often used incorrectly by various propagandists, is, of course, badly needed and well worth an effort by a qualified Torah authority; but it is not the subject of this work.

Political clarification, i.e. definition of the correct Jewish attitude on the basis of political experience and of the actual problems arising from time to time, listing various actions done by the rulers of the State of Israel in relation to Torah and Torah Judaism, is also worth attempting, and it is occasionally being attempted in various publications, but this again is not the purpose of

the present work. Moreover, there is the old Talmudical rule 'just as men's faces are not alike, so their views differ' —a rule that naturally applies to orthodox Jews as well. In political matters concerning how to react to one event or another, there is ample room for differences of opinion; and it is not the aim of this writer to go into these matters here.

The purpose of this work will be ideological clarification—definition and analysis, clarification but not polemics. It is not the aim of this work to carry on a dispute with anybody, but only to seek *a definition and formulation of an existing 'Weltanschauung'*. It is true, of course, and there is no reason why this fact should be concealed, that this writer personally adheres to the views which are described in it. Hence, it might be an exaggeration to claim that this work has been written with absolute and complete objectivity, merely as a sort of research essay on a subject far from the author's heart, as if it were, say, a thesis on Chinese literature. At the same time, however, an attempt has been made to describe this view as objectively as is humanly possible under the given circumstances —all the more so in view of the fact that it is not intended exclusively for orthodox readers, and certainly not exclusively for those who do adhere to the views in it. Far from it. The intention is to present also—and perhaps primarily—to the 'non-religious' reader the views of Torah Judaism (or any other name by which one may designate Jews faithful to the Torah) and to make them *understand* even though they might not approve.

Two more introductory remarks will not be entirely out of place in view of the atmosphere in which we are living today. The present writer does not claim to represent, nor is he affiliated with, any movement or party; nor are the views expressed here—as he will try to prove—the monopoly of any political party. Legally and officially, the

author alone is responsible for the views presented. This fact, though perhaps a shortcoming from one point of view, has its advantages as well. It eliminates the necessity—to use the American vernacular—of ‘plugging in a commercial’ for one party-slogan or another, of proving that one particular organization, party or group is always right in all its actions and in its general policy. Views and not organizations are being discussed here.

On the other hand, this writer will take the liberty of making one personal remark. During my lifetime, I have had the privilege and opportunity of meeting personally, or otherwise coming into contact with, almost all the Torah authorities of our generation, men of varying types and backgrounds, originating from different countries. As for those whom I have not been privileged to know personally, I have either been on terms of friendship or acquaintance with their faithful disciples or followers, or I have at least seen their writings. The views which I have presented derive from an attempt to find the ‘common denominator’ of all the various approaches wherein all Torah authorities—or, at least, the overwhelming majority of them—agree. Therefore, although I do not, as I have pointed out, officially represent any individual or group, yet it is clear that, in general principles at least, I seek to reflect the climate of opinion prevalent among the Torah-leaders of our generation.

One final remark: This work neither denies nor overlooks the fact that there are observant Jews whose views are in conflict with or even in direct opposition to the views expressed here. However, it is not intended as a polemic work. Accordingly, although the fact of conflict will, of course, also have to be mentioned and discussed, the main purpose remains to explain and define the views that are presented with discussion of other views confined to what may be necessary for that purpose.

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WHAT IS THE STATE OF ISRAEL?

In our contemporary world, two types of state are to be distinguished. There are states—mainly Western democracies—governed by elected rulers. Many, or perhaps most of these states, are governed by a party—the party winning the elections. At the time of writing, the Tories govern the United Kingdom, the Gaullists rule France and the Republicans are in power in the United States. It may well be the case that in one State or another, the party in power abuses its power. It may be the case that in one state or another, the party in power has obtained its majority of votes—hence, its power—through improper means. Furthermore, the regime may be corrupt and degenerate; yet, in all these states, the party is the ruling power *inside* the State, but is not the State itself.

On the other hand, there are States where the Party constitutes the State. In the Soviet Union, for example, it would not be accurate to say that Communism is the ruling power in the State, because Communism is the State. The Bolshevik party which had been an illegal party under previous regimes, became THE STATE after its accession to power. The establishment of the 'Soviet Union' did not constitute a mere change of regime or a change of the party in power in Russia; but, through it, A NEW STATE WAS BORN! In the particular case of the Soviet Union, even the name of the new State clearly indicates this fact: „Союз Советских Социалистических Республик” The Union of Soviet (Council-governed) Socialist Republics. Thus, 'Socialism' (which is the polite name for Communism) constitutes an integral part of the State itself, its very *raison d'être*. Without Communism—the Soviet

Union will cease to exist *as such*. It might—at least theoretically—happen that one bright morning the Soviet Union will decide (as it boasts of having done long ago) to liberalize the regime, to loosen the control over its population, to facilitate movement and travel inside and out of the country, etc.—but it will never be able to renounce Communism. For without Communism, the ‘Union of Soviet Socialist Republics’ would no longer exist.

The State of Israel belongs to the latter type of State. The State of Israel is not one in which Zionism rules; the State of Israel is *Zionism*; and the fact that Zionism does not happen to appear in the official name of the State is of not the least significance. The State of Israel may be ruled by a truly democratic government one day; its economic policy may undergo certain changes (as has already been the case to a degree); theoretically (though practically this is most unlikely), bourgeois parties may win the elections and turn Israel into a more capitalist State. But there is one thing that can never be changed in the State: it can never cease to be a Zionist State. Just as the Soviet Union was born of and from Communism, similarly the State of Israel was born of and from Zionism, the realization of which it now constitutes. It has vested Zionism which until 1948 had been a movement or party with new powers: it has given Zionism the power and authority of a State; yet Zionism remains the very nature, the true identity of the State, without which it would not be the State of Israel.

To avoid misunderstandings, it should be remarked here that when talking about Zionism, one obviously refers not to the Zionist Organization but to the Zionist *idea*. In other words, when we try to define our attitude towards the State of Israel, we first have to determine and clarify our attitude towards Zionism which, as has been said, is the basis and character of the State.

WHAT IS ZIONISM?

The term 'Zionism' is also one of those subjects which are often discussed—both by adherents and opponents—but little understood.

To be sure, the writings of the fathers of Zionism are nowadays part of the obligatory curriculum of studies in Israeli schools (including at least a major part of the religious schools)—to a far greater extent than—'lehavdil'—the 'Chumash', and even than mathematics and history. In the communities of the diaspora, 'Zionism' is also a household-name that is very broadly used. Yet very few, including even the highly educated, know what it really means. The name of this movement (which, incidentally, has recently lost its popularity and has become a derisive synonym for monotonous nonsense in the lingo of Israel's young generation) is misleading: 'Zion' is, in fact, merely one of the goals of Zionism, and by no means an essential one. Not only in present-day America and Western Europe, but also in the other countries of the diaspora before the war, there were many loyal and enthusiastic Zionists who never thought of migrating to 'Zion'. There was a time when even official Zionist policy had been prepared to drop 'Zion' out of its program altogether or, at least, to regard it even openly as 'non-essential'. The Sixth Zionist Congress, as many will know, adopted a resolution sponsored by none other than Dr. Herzl himself in favour of renunciation 'for the time being' of the idea of establishing the 'Judenstaat' in Palestine and of the establishment of a Jewish State in Uganda, East Africa. (Interestingly enough, 'Mizrachi'—the religious Zionist party—was among those who voted in favor of that proposal of Dr. Herzl.) If this project was later abandoned, this was done mainly because it was felt that the original Palestine-project would have a greater appeal to the masses.

We would not have mentioned this half-forgotten episode were it not for the need to prove that 'Zion' does not even constitute a condition *sine-qua-non* of Zionism and that there had been a period when Zionism almost entirely abandoned, for practical purposes, the whole issue of 'Zion', i.e. migration to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state in its boundaries. Yet even then it remained 'Zionism'—and not unjustly so. For, in the Zionist concept, 'Zion' really constitutes a *means* and *not an end*. The real aim of Zionism is the one stated innumerable times by the various Zionist thinkers and ideologists from its earliest conception until this day. From the essays of Achad Haam to the speeches of Ben Gurion, we can hear definitions of the one goal—in various versions and phrases but with a never-changing content:

TO CHANGE THE IDENTITY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE!

WHAT IS THE JEWISH PEOPLE?

‘Klal Yisroel’, ‘Knesseth Yisroel’ or whatever name we may call that entity which is commonly known as ‘the Jewish People’ is according to the views of Judaism something that cannot be defined. (When we use the phrase ‘Jewish People’, we do so only for the sake of convenience and brevity in spite of the fact that, as we shall try to prove, this name is essentially inappropriate.) The very idea of definition automatically requires as a preliminary condition that the object to be defined form part of some distinct group or species. Every definition is necessarily divided into two parts: it identifies the group or species to which the object belongs, and only subsequently, indicates of the specific individual character by which the object is distinct within such a group or species. (When defining a ‘chair’, for example, we first have to say that it is a piece of ‘furniture’ (i.e. it belongs to the group of ‘furniture’) and then that it is used as a seat—meaning that it is thereby different from other components of that group).

The concepts of ‘nation’, ‘people’, ‘religion’ are basically non-Jewish. They form part of the non-Jewish pattern of thought and apply only to a non-Jewish background. (The fact that in modern Hebrew these ideas are being translated by certain parallel words from the Scriptures or the Talmud does not, of course, mean that such was their original meaning). ‘Klal Yisroel’ does not, in truth, constitute a ‘nation’ in the accepted sense of the word. Nor is it merely a ‘different nation’ as compared with other nations; the attribute of ‘nation’ or ‘national unit’ in its accepted meaning in the non-Jewish world does not apply to ‘Klal

Yisroel' at all. According to Jewish belief, the Jewish People constitutes a species of its own: 'This People I have created for Myself' (Isaiah 43, 21), 'the people that Thou hast acquired' (Ex. 15, 16) i.e. a special, separate act of Creation by the Almighty. 'The thought of creating the Jewish People preceded every other thought' of the Almighty when creating the Universe according to the teaching of Rabbi Samuel bar Isaac (Bereshith Rabba 1, 5). The Jewish people, as pointed out by the same Midrash, is 'Thy congregation which Thou hast acquired of old' (Ps. 74, 2).

The Jewish People, Rabbi Judah Halevy (the famous medieval poet and philosopher) explains in his 'Kuzari', constitutes a separate entity, a species unique in Creation, differing from nations in the same manner as man differs from the beast or the beast from the plant. Chassidism (Likutei Amorim—Tanya, by Rabbi Shneur Zalmen of Lady, chapter 2) mentions the 'second soul of the Jews' and explains, that although Jews are physically similar to all other men, yet they are endowned with a 'second soul' that renders them a separate species.

Likewise, the Zohar says (Vol. III, 73a): Three levels are joined with one another: G-d, the Torah and the Jewish People. G-d, Torah and Yisroel are one unit.

It is the Torah that constitutes the People. It was only at the giving of the Torah that G-d spoke to His people (Deut. 27, 9): 'This day thou art become a people', or, to use the words of the Talmud (Hullin 10lb), 'they were not called 'Children of Israel' before coming to Mount Sinai'. The great Rabbi Saadya Gaon in his 'Kitab el-imanat wa-l-i'tiqadat' (Emunoth Vedeoth) formulated the famous principle: "Our people is a people only by virtue of its Torah". Without Torah, the Jewish people is not only wanting and defective but ceases to be. The Torah is its soul, its identity. Thus, according to the view of the Torah,

Judaism without Torah does not exist. Again, according to the view of the Torah, neither the Torah itself nor the Jewish people are the result of historical development but the original and final purpose of Creation. Every Jewish child learning his 'Chumash' will certainly forever remember the first 'Rashi'—i.e. Rashi's comment on the first verse of Genesis [a quotation from the Midrash—explaining the word 'Bereshith' (in the beginning)] in which he says: "For the sake of Torah which is called 'beginning'* and for the sake of the Jewish people that is called 'beginning',** 'G-d created the heaven and the earth'.

* "The L-rd made me (Torah) as the *beginning* of His way"
(Prov. 8, 22)

** Israel is the L-rd's hallowed portion, the *beginning* of His increase (Jer. 2, 2)

THE HOLY LAND AND THE 'HOLY TONGUE'

Just as the Jewish People, according to the view of the Torah, is a unique entity and the result of an original and essential act of Divine Creation, all other matters associated with the concepts of 'nation' fundamentally differ from parallel concepts in the non-Jewish world. 'Land and Language' by Torah standards are not 'a national treasure', just as Torah is not 'a religion' (see later) in the generally accepted sense.

Thus Eretz Israel—'a land which the L-rd thy G-d careth for; the eyes of the L-rd thy G-d are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year'***—is also part of that original purpose of Creation, as explained also in the above mentioned commentary of Rashi on the first verse of Genesis, as we shall try to explain later at greater length.

The 'Holy Tongue', likewise, is the language through which G-d created the world. The 'ten fiats' by which G-d created the universe were uttered in the Holy Language, and, as explained particularly by the 'ARI' (Rabbi Isaac Lurie) and subsequently in Chassidic literature, the Holy Language is not only an integral part of Creation but also the life-giving force and very basis of existence of all creatures, of all things existing in the universe: ".....and also with regard to all things created in the world, the names by which they are called in the Holy Tongue are the very letters of the (Divine) speech, descending from level to level from the original Ten Fiats of the Torah.....

*** Deut. 11, 12

which are vested in the individual creature and make it live" (Tanya, Shaar Hayichud Vehaemunah, end of Chapter 1).

The entire universe is a creation embodied in matter, for, in the words of our Sages, the reason for Creation was that 'the Almighty desired to make for Himself a dwelling among those below' (Midrash Tanchuma). Therefore, in this world, even the most spiritual is clad in matter. The commandments of the Torah, though their root and source is in the highest sphere of the Infinite—must all be performed through material objects, and their proper performance can be achieved only through and with matter in its tangible, material form. The commandment of Tephillin can be performed only by putting on the phylacteries made of cattle-skin; Tzitzith have to be made of wool, while Lulab and Ethrog are earthly plants. Even if a man were to comprehend the profoundest secrets symbolized by and embodied in these Mitzvoth, he cannot fulfil them without performing concrete actions. At the same time, it is only the Divine Commandment that transforms, say, the Ethrog into a Mitzvoh. Were a man to take in his hand an Ethrog—even the best and most 'kosher' Ethrog—on the day before or after Succoth, he will thereby be doing nothing more than if he were holding a lemon or an apple. Only if and when he holds the Ethrog in the manner and at the time prescribed by the Torah—only then is he performing the Divine Commandment and thereby attaching himself to the Almighty.

The same, of course, applies to the very study of Torah. A person studying, say, the problem of 'the partners who wanted to erect a dividing wall in their joint courtyard' either from the passage at the beginning of the Talmudical treatise of Baba Bathra, or from the other sacred sources, is thereby studying Torah and performing the commandment that enjoins the study of Torah; and, during his

study, he attains all the sublime attributes ascribed by our sages to one who studies Torah. Yet, a person studying the very same problem of partnership in the building of a dividing wall in a jointly owned yard from, say, the American Civil Code, or from the 'Codex Iustinianus'—will not thereby be performing any Divine commandment or sacred deed, even if the ruling in American or Roman law happens to be exactly the same as that of the Torah in that particular case. Such a man will acquire no greater merit than if he had studied, for example, the Customs regulations of the United States.

To be sure, the Torah, in the aforementioned example, deals with exactly the same down-to-earth yard, the same wall or fence of material wood or stone. Yet, that topic derives from revelation of the Will of the Almighty and as part of the Torah is one of sublime holiness. In other words, the Torah and its commandments also deal with tangible matters—for 'the Torah has not been given to the ministering angels' (Berachot 25b) but was revealed so as to govern first and foremost our life in this world—yet the Torah itself both transcends matter and sanctifies it.

The same principle applies to all other matters referred to above. Eretz Israel, it is true, is a country on the earthly globe. Like other countries, it has trees and stones and rivers and fields and vineyards and mountains and houses; but it is not through them that it became 'the Holy Land'. It acquired its holiness only with the entry of the Ark of the Covenant in front of the Children of Israel, and it is only through that fact that it remains 'Eretz Israel'.

The 'Holy Tongue' is also of a human language with grammar, nouns, verbs, conjugations, etc., like all other languages—but all these are only its external structure. Its soul is sacred and sublime—it is the language of Divine Creation through which all creatures survive, as has been explained above.

'LET US BE AS THE NATIONS' (Ezekiel 20, 32)

This truth of the specific, undefinable nature of the Jewish People, its Torah, the Holy Land, the Holy Language—used to be self-evident to every single Jew throughout the years of the existence of the Jewish people. It is true that in the course of the centuries of our history, there have been individuals or groups—sometimes very large groups—who threw off the “burden” of the Torah and its commandments, either merely to satisfy their appetites or more deliberately. Yet all these—or at least the majority of them—never disputed this basic principle. They were all aware of the fact that there could only be one answer to the questions: ‘What is thine occupation and whence comest thou? What is thy country and of what people art thou? This answer is: ‘I am a Hebrew and I fear the L-rd’ (Jonah 1, 8-9). Even those who abandoned the Torah, could make only one out of two assertions: Either they would maintain that, in their opinion, Jews should stop being Jews, or they would claim—though unjustifiably and often fraudulently—that their view was also in conformity with the Torah but was based on a different interpretation of it.

Even the Sadducees (Tzedukim), and, during a later period, the Karaites claimed that they were observing the Torah according to its true meaning.

The notorious sect of the followers of Shabetai Zvi, the false Messiah of the 17th century, claimed that theirs was the path of the Torah—a claim which they tried to substantiate by all manner of ‘quotations’ from the Talmud, the Zohar, etc. On the other hand, groups like the German assimilationists of the 19th century who claimed that they

were 'Germans of Mosaic faith', made it clear that they wanted to be considered not as 'Jews' but as true sons of the German nation who observe certain Israelite religious traditions.

A member of that group, a writer by the name of Kompert, even went so far as to claim that all European Jews were indeed Germans. In an essay written in a German-Jewish periodical (I think it was the 'Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums' but I am not quite sure), he wrote a sentence of approximately the following content (quoted from memory): " . . . And you, o lonesome wanderer, if, on your long voyage, you come to the gates of a Ghetto in some remote village—stop a while and reflect: 'Hier wohnen Deutsche' (Germans are living here). Their language is an ancient German dialect, and if they use Hebrew terms during scholarly discussions, they do not thereby differ basically from other Germans who use Greek or Latin words for the same object"

All these sects and groups could not and dared not deny the basic fact that 'our people is a people only by virtue of its Torah.' Hence they realized that there could be no abandonment of Torah without abandoning the people, and that there was no other 'Judaism' or 'Jewishness' but Torah.

Until Zionism arrived.

'Zionism', of course, is merely a name given to that movement—incidentally, several years after its foundation. (Another curious coincidence is that the man who coined the term, Dr. Nathan Birnbaum, later left the Zionist movement and became one of its most embittered opponents on the orthodox side.) This cleverly chosen name contributed largely towards the spread of the movement among the masses of simple Jews as well as towards the increase of confusion which persists until this very day—as we shall later explain. For the moment, it is enough to

emphasize that, as every reasonable person will understand, there is nothing in a name; a name means nothing and testifies to nothing. Some of the saddest people are called 'Simcha' or 'Joy', and some of the most quarrelsome are called 'Shalom' or Frederic. A name is merely coincidental. Those who decided to adopt the name of 'Zionism' for their movement, might just as easily have preferred to be called 'Neturei Karta' (Guardians of the City—meaning, of course, the Holy City); and, in that case, those who are now known under the name of 'Neturei Karta', might just as well—and perhaps with more justification—have called themselves 'Zionists' (all the more so since they were practically all born and reared between the walls of Zion). Even under those hypothetical circumstances, the names would have meant neither more nor less than they mean today. The essence of Zionism, as has been explained earlier, is not 'Zion'. The land of Israel constitutes but a means, a part, and not a basis of Zionism. The essence of Zionism is '*Jewish Nationalism*.' The Nationalist movement in the world at large arose some time prior to the advent of Zionism. Before that, 'national consciousness' had hardly been known among the nations in its more modern form. It was a commonly accepted practice, to quote but one example, for a country to crown a king who was a native of, or, as we would say today, whose national origin was derived from, another country e.g. Spain was ruled up to 1930 by the House of Habsburg i.e. Austrians, Roumania by the Hohenzollerns i.e. Germans, etc.

Nationalism in its modern form first arose partly as a result of and later in reaction to Napoleon's ambition to conquer the world, and to subjugate the nations under the flag of the French Empire. The nations, which had been imbued and influenced at the same time with the ideals of "liberté", égalité, fraternité" as proclaimed by the French revolution and subsequently by the same Napoleon,

revolted against the Emperor's ambitions. It was during that period that figures like Andreas Hofer of Austria, or other heroes of allegedly nationalist character, became prominent.

Within Jewry, the first waves of Nationalism arose only about half a century later. During the days of Napoleon, the soil was not yet ripe for it—particularly in Eastern Europe, where the Torah view that 'our people is a people only by virtue of its Torah' was still deep-rooted.

It was only after the advent of assimilation in Western Europe and the 'Haskalah' in Eastern Europe—both of which resulted from an inability to withstand the temptations arising from the spirit of emancipation; only when, under the influence of these movements, observance of and adherence to the Torah had been considerably weakened among many Jews, could Zionism come into existence.

What new ideas did Jewish Nationalism bring?

Its argument was that Jews should become a nation 'as all nations', that Yisroel which had hitherto been in the heart and mind of every Jew a unique entity, a specific creation of the Almighty, should adopt *a new identity* and become 'a nation'—according to the interpretation of that concept among the 'nations of the world'.

At this point, it might be worth while to examine the various interpretations given to the term 'nation' by the various non-Jewish cultures—mainly those of Western Europe, since it was within the cultural sphere of Western Europe that Zionism arose.

Chambers' Encyclopedia (Oxford University Press) has the following definition: Nation is a collective name signifying a certain form of aggregation of individuals—a group of people possessed of certain distinctive characteristics, real or imaginative, united by certain special ties, sentimental, political or both.

The New English Dictionary edited by Sir James A.

H. Murray (Oxford, Clarendon Press) has the following definition: An extensive aggregate of persons so closely associated with each other by common descent, language or history as to form a distinct race or people usually organized as a separate political state and occupying a definite country. In early examples, the racial idea was usually stronger than the political. In recent use, the notion of political unity and integrity is present.

The American *Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary*, published by the Encyclopedia Britannica, has the following definition:

"An aggregation of people of common origin and language". The definition of 'nation' according to the French Encyclopedia of Larouse is as follows:

"Réunion d'hommes habitant la même territoire et ayant une origine et une langue commune ou des intérêts longtemps communs"

(Assembly of people living on the same territory and having a common origin and a common language or common interests of long standing.)

Most of these definitions do not apply to the Jewish people. There is, of course, a 'common origin', just as there is the 'common origin' of mankind as a whole—Adam and Eve. The 'common origin' of the Jewish people genetically began 20 generations after the creation of the world, but in truth 'the (Divine) thought of (creating) the Jewish people preceded everything else' (Midrash, see above). Before heaven and earth had been created, it had already occurred, so to speak, to the Almighty to create Israel as His people, and, according to the rule in Jewish religious philosophy, the final deed is first in thought.

The greatest men in Jewish history had the blood of other races in their veins. David, the King of Israel, had a Moabite ancestress (Ruth). Rabbi Akiba, the hallowed

saint and sage, was a descendant of Siserah; Shemaya and Avtalion, the great teachers and leaders in Jerusalem of the Second Temple were descendants of Sanherib, King of Assyria (see Gittin 57b, Sanhedrin 96b). Even Haman's descendants were teachers of Torah in Benei Brak (*ibid*).

As for territory, the Jewish People, as mentioned above, had become a people long before it had entered and conquered the territory of Palestine: even thereafter it remained on that territory for only a small portion of its history; and even during that brief period it maintained a sovereign state for only a still shorter span of time.

As for Hebrew, it was the spoken language of the Jewish people only during a comparatively short era. The Torah itself was given—according to our sages (Sabbath 88b, see also Sota 32a)—in 70 languages. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that even part of the Scriptures (parts of Daniel and Ezra, one verse in Jeremiah and two words in the Chumash) is in Aramaic, which was also the language of the major part of both Talmuds, the Midrashim, the Book of Zohar, etc. The majority of the writings of Maimonides—including his 'Guide for the Perplexed' (*Dalalat el-Kha'irin*), his Commentary on the Mishna, and some of the works of Rabbi Judah Halevy—such as the Kuzari (*Kitab el-hijja wa-ddalil fi nasr ed-din el-halil*), Rabbenu Jonah (*Marvan ibn Jannah*), Rabbenu Behaye (*Bahya ibn Pakuda*)—including his 'Duties of the Hearts' (*faraid el-qulub*), Rabbi Saadya Gaon (*Sa'adya el-Fayyumi*)—including his 'Emunoth Ve-deoth' (see above)—were written in Arabic, for the simple reason that that was the spoken language of the Jews of their countries. Rashi explains some difficult or technical words in the French of his day and Rabbi Obadia of Bertinoro in Italian or Arabic, etc., etc.

As for 'common history' this could, of course, mean only a common history of recent centuries. A common

history that ceased to be common two thousand years ago, may be shared by many nations of our day who are at the present time quite distinct nations, if not enemies. During the first centuries of the Common Era, when our 'common history' ended, the majority of the European Nations of our day had not even begun to exist as such. There was no common history, or even any outward 'special ties' between the Jews of Yemen and those of Italy or Russia. There were not even 'common interests'; more often than not the interests of the various Jewish communities were—or could have been—conflicting. During the first World War, Jews on the Allied side certainly wished the Allies to win, while the Jews of Austria, for example, sincerely prayed for a victory of Kaiser Franz Josef.

Neither the definitions quoted above, nor any other definition of the concept of 'nation', as accepted among the non-Jewish nations of the world, can therefore apply to the Jewish People. It is none of these factors that renders Yisroel into a 'People', although, as explained above, all the parallel concepts in Judaism (Holy land, Holy tongue, etc.) have a sanctity of their own. They all have their place only and exclusively *within* the framework of Torah. Outside that framework, they lose their entire meaning, as in the example of the 'Ethrog after Succoth' quoted above.

The nationalist movement came to transform Israel's identity and render it into 'a nation like all other nations', with a 'national language', a 'fatherland', etc. Some orthodox thinkers of our generation have therefore defined Zionism as 'national assimilation', i.e. a trend favouring the assimilation of the people as a whole to other nations as opposed to 'individual assimilation' as practised and preached by assimilationists in Western Europe or America, who sought the assimilation of the individual Jew to his non-Jewish environment. Even this definition is not quite exact. As national assimilation one could classify, for

example, the trend of the Soviet rulers to transform all peoples within their sphere of political influence into 'People's Democracies' along the Russian pattern, including even such people who differ basically in their characteristic traits and in their mentality from the Russian way of life, such as the Czechs, or East Germans, whose culture Russia strives to "Russify", though maintaining and even furthering their national languages, etc. What Zionism has done to the Jewish People, however, is far more than that: it is not merely a transition from one culture to the other, but a complete change of *identity*, a forcible transformation from 'This People I have created for Myself' into 'a nation as all the nations'. To use the language of Rabbi Judah Halevy in his 'Kuzari', this would be equivalent to attempting to force humans to walk on all four extremities and to live an animal life, while at the same time proclaiming that this was the way of genuine 'humanity'. In other words, the new idea implemented by Zionism consisted of a change of definition of the Jewish People. Its definition from Mount Sinai until Zionism had been TORAH: henceforth it became national affiliation. It is obvious that this view which is the real substance of Zionism, is diametrically opposed to the view of the Torah, regardless of whether or not Zionism happens to be 'religious'.

'RELIGION' AND ITS PLACE IN THE ZIONIST CONCEPT

This re-definition of 'Israel' or 'the Jewish People' introduced by Zionism, automatically involved other re-definitions along the same pattern. Thus, as has been already explained, the Holy Land was turned into a 'national home' (patria-Vaterland), the Holy Tongue (Leshon Hakodesh) into a 'national language' (see the chapter on 'the Holy Tongue') and the Torah degraded to the level of a 'religion'. The very idea of 'religion' is foreign to the Jewish world of thought, even to the Hebrew Language.

No word in Hebrew serves as a common denominator for the Torah of Israel and the worship of other nations. In both Bible and Talmud, mention is always made only of 'the Law of G-d', The Teaching (Oraytha), The Merciful (Rachmono—as an epithet for G-d, the Giver of Torah) on the one side, and—'lehavdil'—of 'the gods of the nations', 'the idols' and 'foreign worship' (Avodah Zarah), etc., on the other.

The entire concept of 'religion' is therefore taken from non-Jewish ways of thinking. According to those ideas, religion—particularly in the modern world—constitutes a personal or group-concern, but certainly a concept quite distinct from 'nationality' and absolutely independent of it. There are many nations—sometimes enemies—who belong to the same religion. France and Austria-Hungary, for example, fought against one another during World War I; yet both had Catholic majorities. Germany and England were enemies during both World Wars, although both are predominantly Protestant. Again, there are nations adher-

ing to more than one religion. Some of the Arab leaders and spokesmen, for instance, are Christians. Lebanon, a genuine Arab State and member of the Arab League, is composed of Christians, Moslems and Druzes living side by side. Even a Lord, a member of the House of Lords, was—of all things—a Moslem. Similarly, in Poland, there were Moslems headed by a 'Mufti' of their own. In Yugoslavia, there are Moslems, Greek-Orthodox and Catholics—yet nobody will cast any doubt at the 'Englishness' of Mr. Philby, or, for the sake of argument, at the Yugoslav identity of the Moslems of Sarajevo. History also knows of nations who collectively changed their religion—as was indeed the case with most present-day European nations at an earlier or later date. Those changes may have had certain influences over their cultures, but they certainly did not change their national identities. The Turks have remained Turks throughout the centuries, despite their conversion to Islam with its religious emphasis on Arabic as the language of the Koran, and despite the fact that—until 1928—they used the Arabic alphabet for their language.

With the transformation of Yisroel into 'a nation among the nations', Torah necessarily had to assume under the influence of Zionist ideology, its place as a 'religion' which is a private matter for individuals or groups to 'take or leave' with its jurisdiction confined to worship and ceremonies. According to Zionist ideology, whether a Jew maintains an affirmative attitude towards that 'religion', rejects or even fights against it, or remains indifferent to it—none of these attitudes could add to or subtract anything from his 'Jewishness'.

This attitude was clearly and unmistakably defined by the Zionist ideologist, Achad Haam, who said:

"I can judge as I please the beliefs and principles which I have inherited from my ancestors, without any fear that

thereby my attachment to my people would be severed ('Crossroads' Vol. 1, page 136).

Quite logically and reasonably, other Zionist ideologists went as far as to say that since the criterion for being a good son to one's people was whether one helped to further the interests of the people, and since national interests now require 'emancipation from Judaism' (shichrur min Hayahadut—Berdiczewski), hence a Jew who remains faithful to his religion is 'a bad Jew' since by pursuing his private beliefs he harms the interests of the people, while only the non-religious Jew can really be considered 'a good Jew'. Quite logically again, another Zionist ideologist—J. Ch. Brenner—added that seeing that there was nothing wrong, 'Jewishly' speaking, in a Jew adhering to Christian beliefs, a Torah-observant Jew was a 'bad Jew' in that his belief was contrary to 'national interests' while a Jew who believed in Christianity, could be a 'good Jew'. Here are his own words (*Hapoel Hatzair*, Jaffa, Vol. 25): "A person can be a good Jew and at the same time maintain an attitude of religious awe towards the Christian legend of the son of — who was sent to the sons of men, and who, by his blood, atoned for the sin of the generations . . . , since his views, which are his private affair, do no harm to the 'national interest' ". This, mind you, was over half a century ago, when none of these men dreamt that their extremist view would so soon become reality . . .

It is true that Achad Haam rebuked those extremists, but once the basic nationalist principle is accepted, their attitude is quite logical.

Basically, little more than perhaps the language has changed in Zionist ideology from those days of over half a century ago until our own era. Berdiczewski and Brenner were the forerunners of today's 'Canaanites' (who some-

times literally repeat their views) only in respect of their frankness. Substantially, they were also the forerunners of the accepted Israeli or Zionist ideology of our own day, as we shall later explain.

Furthermore, 'religion' among the non-Jewish nations—particularly in the modern era—is a matter confined to a certain area within life and unconnected with the other areas of life and society. Torah, on the other hand, is a 'Law of Life' governing *all* phases of the life of the individual and the group alike. The laws pertaining to, say, partnership or mortgage are an integral and inseparable part of Torah no less than (for instance) the laws of Tephillin.

Those parts of the Torah that correspond to what is known as 'religion' among gentile nations, constitute but a minute part—and by no means the most important one—of Torah. The Church, for example, constitutes such an essential part of Christianity that the word 'church' is sometimes used as a synonym for the Christian religion. In Judaism, the Synagogue—important as it may be in the life of the people where it certainly occupies a central place—is by no means the essence of Torah. Prayers may also be said at home, and even communal prayers may be held at any place where ten Jewish adults gather. 'Services' may be conducted by any Jew, etc. The Rabbi, in the Jewish concept, is merely a person with an ample knowledge of the laws of Torah who can therefore be relied upon to decide dubious cases. He possesses no personal status of 'priesthood' as in gentile religions. Even matters like the solemnization of marriages—which require the participation of the clergy in Christianity—are not essentially and basically connected with the participation of the Rabbi. In Jewish marriage, the Rabbi acts only as representative and legal adviser of the parties, for it is fundamentally the bridegroom himself who 'betrothes'

(mekaddesh) his bride; he does not answer 'I do' to questions put to him but actually performs the act of marriage by saying 'Harei At' etc. (Hereby art thou betrothed to me etc.). Even the blessings are said by the Rabbi only in his capacity of representative of the parties. Basically, therefore, the person of the Rabbi plays no role in the solemnization of marriages. Halachic regulations require that the man 'officiating' at a marriage be "well versed in matters of marriage and divorce" in order to be able to give a decision if any question should arise, and the entire institution of an 'officiating minister' at marriages was introduced only in order to ensure that the requirements of the law of the Torah be met. The same, of course, applies to all other matters of this kind.

Thus, we see that even externally there is no "common denominator" covering both Torah and the non-Jewish religions. The entire idea of "religion" originates from non-Jewish concepts, according to which, as we have earlier explained, "religion", particularly nowadays, is a private matter for individuals or groups and one quite independent of "nationalism".

This latter view is, of course, the worst heresy in terms of Torah. It constitutes an eradication of Torah in the fullest sense of the word,—and, in this respect, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE WHATSOEVER WHETHER THE INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP ATTITUDE TOWARDS "RELIGION" IS AFFIRMATIVE OR NEGATIVE. (It is obvious, particularly according to the Halachic opinion according to which **מצוות אין צריכות כוונה** that it is always better if Divine commandments are actually performed than if they are not, yet, in judging the *principle*, this makes no difference, and it is the principle, of course, with which we are concerned here). He who considers the Torah as a "religion" according to the non-Jewish concept, he who admits that this "religion" is

purely a voluntary matter, that it constitutes only part of "Jewishness", and that there can be "Jewishness" without "religion" in the same way as there is an Englishness without Protestantism—even if he personally approves of that "religion" and observes its commandments and rites—thereby asserts his fundamental opposition to Torah Judaism. Compared with this fundamental the individual balance of "Mitzvos" and "Averos" might seem a secondary matter.

Let us illustrate this by means of an up-to-date example from the "Jewish" life of our day—an example which, regrettably enough, is not merely hypothetical nowadays. In the United States (and not only there), certain Jewish quarters celebrate Christmas with parties at which kosher or even "strictly kosher" food is served in honor of the occasion. It is, of course, always desirable for a Jew—from the Halachic viewpoint—to partake of kosher food, wash his hands, pronounce the blessing, eat with his head covered, say grace after meals etc. Yet the whole idea of a "kosher Christmas-party" is none the less outrageous; the party itself constitutes at least * אֲבִזְרֵי יְהוָה דְּעַבּוֹדָה זָרָה and the "kosher" ingredients of the meal add little but bitter irony and mockery.

We shall have an opportunity to go further into this matter in our chapter on "Religious Zionism".

GALUTH AND GEULAH

(Exile and Redemption)

Had the aim of Zionism been to advocate this conversion of "this People which I have created for Myself" into "a nation as all the nations" only in theory, it is very doubtful whether it would have succeeded, as it did, in conquering the hearts of the masses. In the framework of the "translation of concepts" or "transformation", Zionism

* An accessory of strange worship.

had also to concern itself with the other basic tenets that form an indivisible part of the Jewish People: Galuth and Geulah—Exile and Redemption.

Both Exile and Redemption, according to the Torah, are *not* the results of historic developments. They also are matters rooted deeply in the beginning of Creation, in the blueprint of the foundation of the universe “among the Secrets of the Almighty”. Prior even to the creation of heaven and earth, the Midrash tells us, Exile and Redemption had already been created. Commenting on the second verse of Genesis, the Midrash says: “And the earth was unformed”—this is the Kingdom of Babylon etc. “and void”—this is the Kingdom of Media, etc., “and darkness”—this is the Kingdom of Greece, etc. “upon the face of the deep”—this is the Kingdom of Evil (meaning our present exile) which is unexplorable, etc., “and the spirit of G-d hovered, etc.—this is the spirit of King Messiah (Bereshith Rabba 2, 5).

The tidings of exile and redemption had already been given to Abraham before Israel existed as a people at all, and were afterwards explicitly and meticulously described in the Torah before the Jewish People ever entered its country: “But if ye will not hearken unto Me I will bring your land into desolation and I will scatter you among the nations then I will remember My covenant with Abraham (Lev. 26) If any of thine that are dispersed be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will the L-rd thy G-d gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee” (Deut 30, 4). All these events were predicted to Israel; they constitute part and parcel of the Torah which, so to speak, is the blueprint of Creation. As our Sages said: “. . . . as a mason does not build on his own, but looks into a plan, so The Almighty looked into the Torah and thereupon created the world” (Bereshith Rabba 1, 2).

According to the Jewish view, the Exile was imposed upon us against our will and in a supernatural manner; we have survived throughout it only supernaturally; and the redemption will come only through the Messiah. The belief in the coming of the Messiah is one of the thirteen basic principles of our faith to no less a degree than the belief in the existence of the Creator and the truth of Torah. "He who says that the resurrection of the dead is not derived from the Torah", according to our Sages, and attention should be paid to the fact that they do not speak of one who disbelieves in the resurrection altogether but of one who, while believing in the resurrection, claims that it is not contained in the Torah, i.e. that it is not part of the 'Divine Blueprint' preceding and directing creation—"has no part in the hereafter" (Sanhedrin 90a)—the most severe of all penalties in the eyes of our Sages.

Zionism, however, when seeking to eradicate Israel's identity as "This people which I have created for Myself" and turn it into a "normal" nation with all the ideas and attributes associated with "normal" nations, had necessarily to approach matters of Galuth and Geula quite differently. It cannot, to be sure, provide any "normal" explanation as to how this "nation" had managed to survive its dispersion for almost two thousand years, while other nations that have certainly been far more "normal" have perished. But, as far as the present is concerned and for all practical purposes, Zionism sees in Galuth only a "national" process resulting from political circumstances during the era of the Roman Empire, and consequently regards the return of the nation to its "normality" as a nation dwelling on its own soil also merely as a process to be achieved through a similarly "normal" political or military approach.

Needless to say, this view too is diametrically opposed to the view of Torah and to the knowledge and belief that

"because of our sins were we expelled from our country" and that Jews will be redeemed only through repentance". (Yerushalmi Taanith 1, 1). Nor need one repeat that everything that has been said above with regard to "religion", applies equally in this respect. Here, too, the Zionist view does not become less hostile to the Torah-view if, say, the Offices of the Zionist Congress are closed on Sabbath, if the kitchens of the Israeli Army serve kosher food, etc. Not that these achievements are to be minimized; but as has been explained above, this is *not* the real issue.

“IVRITH” AND “L’SHON HAKODESH”

In the course of transformation and “normalization” of the Jewish people, the language naturally had to be transformed likewise. The “Holy Tongue” which, as we have earlier explained, plays such a fundamental role in the Torah, must also have its place assigned to it under the new “normalized” set up. Just as Yisroel became “the Jewish Nation”, just as the Holy Land became first the “Vaterland” and later “the State”, just as Torah became a “religion”—in the same manner, “the Holy Tongue” had to become ‘the national language’.

To be sure, a separate language is not an indispensable ingredient of a “nation” in non-Jewish thought. All South American nations, for instance (except Brazil), speak Spanish. England and America—not always on very friendly terms and certainly now two different nations—both speak English. Arabic is spoken everywhere between Morocco and Iraq, between Syria and Saudi Arabia, by a dozen nations that often quarrel with one another. On the other hand, the Indian nation has five entirely different “national languages” so that until this day English is frequently spoken in the Parliament of New Delhi as it is the only language generally understood by all deputies. The Swiss nation, too, has three national languages, and so forth.

Yet, in nationalism the promotion of a “national language” is an important propaganda factor. During the recent half-century or so, some nations have tried to revive ancient languages that had survived in common usage only in rural and mountainous areas, etc. We can witness the process in all parts of the world, on both sides

of the Iron Curtain. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Viet Nam, the various African countries that are striving for or have obtained political independence—all are working hard to re-adapt their languages to modern civilized usage. This process began around the time when Zionism came into being. Relatively few people know, for instance, that the Roumanian language only 50 years ago had no established spelling and had only shortly before adopted the Latin alphabet (instead of the Cyrillic which is, incidentally, now being reintroduced by the USSR in the "Moldavian SSR"—better known to Jews as Bessarabia).

Moreover, the Hebrew language did not have to be "dug up" as was the case with Gaelic, Lithuanian, etc., from the speech of remote mountaineers and villagers. In writing and reading, it had never ceased to be used. Although Yiddish was spoken in Eastern Europe, it was considered a sign of ignorance to use it even for business or private correspondence; and every Jew who hoped to avoid being considered an ignoramus, would try, however hard it may have been, to write or to have his letters written in Hebrew, no matter how poor was the level of his stylistic attainments.

Thus, the "revival of Hebrew" or, more precisely, its transformation from the status of the Holy Tongue into the "national language" became almost a sport with early Zionists. During the early stages of Zionism, it constituted the easiest part of its task for, in those days, every Jew had some idea of Hebrew through his prayer-book and Chumash. It is only after estrangement from Torah Judaism—largely due to that very same Zionism—that learning Hebrew seems to have become a task of exceptional difficulty for Zionists residing in the diaspora

Though perhaps less noticed and less discussed, this transformation of the Holy Tongue constitutes a violation of Torah teaching no less serious than all the other trans-

formations, namely, those of the Jewish People, Torah and Eretz Israel. The reason why this fact is less discussed is very simple. A language is not a tangible matter; and in this case the transformation needs a minimum of linguistic insight for it to be noticed. It is not our purpose here to go into every detail of it; but it will not be superfluous to devote at least a few brief paragraphs to this interesting subject.

Every language has what we may call a body and a spirit. This is not merely a metaphysical concept, but a principle generally recognized by linguistic science. The body of the language is its vocabulary, its grammatical structure, etc. The spirit of the language—similar to the spirit of man—is that intangible something that animates the language, that lends it its specific, distinct character, appearing here and there, sometimes in the syntax, sometimes in other grammatical features, and particularly in its irregularities. It is the spirit of the language that reflects the spirit of the nation speaking it. In most cases, the spirit and body of the language are compatible for they emanate from the same people. In some cases, however, a language whose body belongs to one family may have the spirit of another—mostly for historical reasons. One typical example is provided by Amharic—the language predominant in present-day Ethiopia. It belongs to the *Semitic* group, and originates from Ge'ez, the ancient language of Ethiopia (still used by the Church). Ge'ez is a typical Semitic language, closer in some respects—within the Semitic family—to Hebrew than, say, to Arabic. The grammar of modern Amharic and its vocabulary are also typical Semitic in their structure. The language has three-letter “roots”, several “aspects” (binyanim) of verbs, and, basically, a vowel-less script (though different from Hebrew, Arabic and Syriac in its manner of inserting vowel-marks) like other Semitic languages, with which it

shares many other characteristic Semitic features. Yet, in truth the language is not a Semitic one, since the nation using it is a Negro nation, which had adopted the language for historical reasons. The original spirit of the African nation breaks through the Semitic skeleton of the language and reveals its characteristic traits. This is an undisputed fact. I have purposely chosen such a distant example in order to be able to speak of it more dispassionately. But, basically the same thing has happened to Modern Hebrew. The Language has been transformed from a Divine Language to a European—not even a Semitic—language.

In this connection, it might not be out of place to mention that this fact has been recognized even by quite impartial linguists. The famous German Semitologist, Bergstrasser, in his book on Semitic Languages (*Einführung in die Semitischen Sprachen*, Munich, 1928) divides his discussion of Hebrew into three parts: Ancient Hebrew (Biblical Language); Middle-Hebrew (Mishnaic language) and Modern Hebrew. To him Hebrew is but one language amidst Assyrian, Syriac, Arabic, Maltese, etc. When discussing Modern Hebrew, he says (page 47): “. . . ein Hebräisch, das in Wirklichkeit eine europäische Sprache mit durchsichtiger hebräischer Verkleidung ist . . . mit nur ganz äußerlich hebräischem Charakter” (“. . . a Hebrew which is in reality a European language with a transparent Hebrew disguise . . . with only a purely superficial Hebrew character”).

Let us quote several examples from the Modern Hebrew vocabulary which, innocent though they might seem, reflect some of the real trends automatically emanating from the “nationalization” of the Hebrew Language.

“Chashmal”, for instance, is the usual Hebrew word for electricity. This word originally appears in the Book of Ezekiel (1, 4) in the chapter describing the Divine vision of the prophet. This chapter, which is usually referred to

as "maase merkovo", is one of the most hallowed and most mysterious of Biblical passages. Only the very great and devout are allowed to delve into these secrets outlined in the prophetic vision of the Almighty. In that vision, the prophet saw a great fire, "and out of the midst thereof as the colour of 'chashmal' ". What 'chashmal' really means is, to say the least, a subject for scholarly research. The Septuagint translates it as "elektron" which is the Greek for amber (a mineral by the friction of which a flash is derived, hence the association). It is, of course, not our purpose here to go into exegetic deliberations or etymological research. Practically, however, the fact remains that, throughout Jewish history, the very mention of "chashmal" aroused a feeling of awe in the mind of every Torah-true Jew, child or adult, seeing that "chashmal" is automatically associated with the most Divine, the most sublime, whereas in our time the Modern-Hebrew-speaking child or adult knows only that "chashmal" means electricity, something which he uses and encounters a hundred times a day, something devoid of any sanctity and associated only with his living-room, television, radio or bathroom.

Another example can be taken from the post-Biblical Hebrew vocabulary—the word "Aggadah". In the mind of the Torah-true Jew, learned or even illiterate, Aggadah meant the assembly of Talmudical moral teaching, which is described by Chassidism as "the interior of Torah". The word used to arouse in every Jew a feeling of warmth, of moral strength, of faith, of love and affection for his ancient Sages and for his people. In modern Hebrew, the word "Aggadah" designates merely a legend or folk-tale. Little Red Riding Hood or the Story of the Three Little Bears are "Aggadah" in Modern Hebrew. Subconsciously, therefore, the hallowed teachings of the Talmud also become nothing more than fairy-tales, part of the "national

mythology" if you wish, and again—this is exactly what Zionism wants.

May I conclude this section by quoting a true story, amusing but all the more typical, once related to me by an esteemed friend in Jerusalem. His grandchildren live in a small town near Tel Aviv. Their mother-tongue, of course, is Hebrew but they also speak Yiddish quite fluently, particularly with grandpa and grandma. My friend once asked his little granddaughter: What do you answer when you are asked 'how are you'? "Well, grandpa," was the prompt answer, "when you are asked in Hebrew "ma shlomech", you answer "tov me'od" (very good), and when you are asked in Yiddish "vos machste", you answer "boruch Hashem" (praised be G-d)

Out of the mouth of babes

Furthermore, the "transformation" of Loshon Hakodesh into Modern Hebrew has incurred the particular danger that, as language is an intangible, abstract thing, it might be—as it so often was and still is—presented as a "substitute" for the longing for some "spiritual content" to fill the spiritual gap left in human souls by the abandonment of Torah.

Indeed, the study of "Ivrit" soon became a favorite pastime with the "enlightened" Zionist youth of the little towns and townlets of Eastern Europe. To make it more attractive on the one side, and to emphasize the distinctness from the "L'shon Hakodesh" of the Beth Hamidrash, somebody invented a special device: the so-called "Sephardic" pronunciation (which, as we shall soon see, is not Sephardic at all). This made the study of Hebrew more attractive by giving it an exotic flavor. The reason given for the selection of the "Sephardic" pronunciation was that it is the more ancient and the more original and correct way of pronouncing Hebrew.

Scientifically speaking, this entire reasoning is, to say

the least, somewhat amateurish. Firstly, one must not confuse all Oriental Jews with those originating from Spain (Sephard). "Sephardi" pronunciation—in the loose popular use of the term—is as varied as Ashkenazi. Secondly, its "antiquity" as compared with the varieties of Ashkenazi pronunciation is—again, to say the least—a fact which has yet to be proved. Even if this were so, it would still be questionable—even from a purely nationalist viewpoint, without any consideration for the traditional Jewish principle of "Do not forsake thy mother's teaching"—whether the antiquity of a pronunciation necessarily means that it must continue to be followed in the present and future. Only in the remote hills and highlands of Scotland may English be pronounced in exactly the same way as it was in the days of Chaucer, for example, and the same, of course, applies to all languages.

Moreover, there is no scientific proof that the allegedly "Sephardi" pronunciation really is the older one. The accepted scientific opinion—and I am referring here to linguists and not necessarily to orthodox Jews—is rather that both trends of pronunciation derive from ancient dialects, the one having been used in the Southern part and the other in the Northern part of Palestine. In any event, it remains a fact, for instance, that the pronunciation of Hebrew of the Yemenites approximates to the "Ashkenazic" pronunciation—as far as the vowels are concerned—of Lithuanian Jews (inasmuch as the "cholom" is pronounced "ay"). Nor has anyone ever claimed that Yemenite Jews had once been under any influence of German Jews. According to their own tradition, the Jewish community of Yemen dates back to the era of the First Temple. (Incidentally, most languages have dialects involving important differences of pronunciation. In Syriac—one of the very few living remnants of ancient Aramaic, which is still used by Christian sects in Northern Iraq and

Lebanon—there are two methods of vocalization—known as Nestorian and Jacobite—as well as differences of pronunciations similar—lehavdil—to the case of Hebrew (“kometz” being pronounced as “a” or “o” respectively).

The Zionist adoption of the “Sephardi” pronunciation meant a double loss—again, from the purely linguistic viewpoint, without any other consideration. Ashkenazi pronunciations make a clearer distinction between the vowels patach and kometz and distinguish between the aspirated and the unaspirated “tav”. The “Sephardi” pronunciation, on the other hand, has the advantage of distinguishing between the various gutturals (alef and ayin, khof and het) but this distinction is made only by Jews who live in the sphere of the Arabic language where these consonants are also distinctly pronounced. There is, of course, no organic connection between the “Sephardi” (kamatz-a) pronunciation and the distinct pronunciation of gutturals. (Yemenites, who, as has been said, cling in some respects to the “Ashkenazi” way of pronouncing vowels, pronounce consonants even more distinctly than Sephardim—inasmuch as they distinguish also between the aspirate and inaspirate of d, g, and t). Modern “Ivrit” pronunciation, even from the purely linguistic viewpoint, combines the disadvantages and shortcomings of all groups. Like “Sephardim”, it disregards the distinctions between patach and kamatz and between aspirate and inaspirate tav, while retaining the Ashkenazi disregard for the pronunciation of gutturals and the distinction between the kaf and qof, etc.

All this, of course, has caused little concern to anybody; but, seen in a profounder light, “the rebirth of the language” is merely another of the ways leading to the one and central purpose, i.e. the transformation of the “Holy Tongue” into a “national language” as part of the transformation of Yisroel into “a nation as other nations”.

WHY ZIONISM SUCCEEDED

It is no wonder that Zionism succeeded in spreading so widely among the masses. Even half a century ago, not everyone was "intelligent". The very word "Eretz Israel" has a charm for each and every Jew. The young people whose fingers had already been scorched with assimilation and with the endeavour to follow the paths of the gentiles, embraced this new type of "Judaism" with its new and original message to the effect that one can be a proud and loyal Jew without having to carry the burden of Mitzvoth or even that of belief. Thus, one could enjoy, so to speak, both worlds alike, or, to use a more simple expression, eat one's cake and have it, remaining a Jew and caring for the salvation of the Jewish people, and partaking, at the same time, of all the tempting pleasures which the non-Jewish environment could offer. What with the study of Hebrew satisfying every possible "yen" for spirituality—this marvellous "invention" soon conquered many hearts, particularly in the little townlets. A great many devout Jews, simple as they were and unaware of the intricate problems, innocently thought that this was a beginning of the fulfillment of their Messianic hopes.

In addition, Zionism from its very origin proved itself most capable of conducting intensive, well-calculated propaganda campaigns with true German thoroughness—most of the founders of Zionism having been either of German origin, or graduates of German universities. Zionism also knew how to "pull the strings" in the right places, even inciting and fostering antisemitism wherever necessary, in order to make Jews feel like strangers in the countries of their residence*—but these matters are not part of our subject.

* For details and documentation of this highly interesting but little known chapter, see "Who gave Jacob for a Spoil?" by Chaim Bloch, New York, 1957.

TORAH-TRUE JEWRY

Our sages teach us: "Who is wise? He who foresees the results". The overwhelming majority of Torah authorities soon realized the grave danger—both spiritually and physically—latent in Zionism. Their attitude towards Zionism could only be a negative one, and, therefore, the same negative attitude was shared by all groups over which the influence of Torah leaders predominated.

Zionism, of course, could not and would not limit itself to the realm of ideology. Body and soul are always closely tied to each other. Zionist propaganda, therefore, caused not only ideological and theoretical estrangement from the Torah-view, but was also largely accompanied by complete abandonment of practical Torah observance. Nonetheless, it is absolutely wrong to maintain, as many do, that the opposition to Zionism on the orthodox side resulted only from the fact that most of the Zionist leaders were irreligious—an opinion inherently implying a criticism of Torah-true leaders for not having endeavoured to attain a leading position in Zionism, in which case, it is argued, they would have guided Zionism along the path of Torah and, accordingly, the State of Israel would have been built up in the spirit of Torah, etc. This reasoning emanates from an incorrect view of things. Torah authorities did not reject Zionism *because* its leaders were mostly irreligious. The picture is entirely reversed: this fact was not the *reason* for disapproval of Zionism by the Torah authorities,

but the other way round: this fact was a *result* of diametrical opposition of the nature of Zionism to the Torah view. In other words, it was not merely "coincidental" that the leaders and spokesmen of Zionism were mostly irreligious: their lack of religious feeling is rooted in the very nature and essence of Zionism. On the soil of Torah, with a Torah-true Jewish people observing and faithful to Torah in mind and deed, *Zionism could never have arisen*, for, as we have tried to explain above, it is DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF JEWISH BELIEF. Thus, the argument "had the Torah authorities joined Zionism" is paradoxal. Had the Torah authorities been obeyed, there could never have been a Zionism in the first place.

Therefore, if there is any question at all, it is not "Why did the orthodox *not* join Zionism" but the reverse: "How could there have been orthodox Jews who *did* join Zionism?" To analyse this last question, we shall later devote a complete chapter.

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

In the meantime, Zionist leaders continued "pulling strings" in the international arena. The first World War presented the best opportunity for such activity. Almost all the major powers were approached with offers implying the possibility of support by "World Jewry" in return for their consent to support a "Jewish National Home" in Palestine. Once it became clear that Britain would conquer Palestine from the crumbling Ottoman Empire, the string pulling was intensified on the British scene. Finally, on November 2, 1917, the famous Balfour Declaration was issued by the late Lord Balfour who stated in the House of Commons that "H.M. Government would welcome the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine".

Those "in the know"—and particularly within the Zionist leadership—knew that this declaration, in the text in which it had been given, did not exactly constitute a victory for the cause which Zionists had striven to achieve, and was later to be a source of all kinds of troubles and even bloody riots during the 25 years of the British Mandate. This fact, however, in no way diminished Jewish enthusiasm, and in many quarters the Balfour Declaration was compared to nothing less than the Declaration of Cyrus authorizing the rebuilding of the Second Temple (Ezra 1, 2).

At this point, we are for the first time in the history of Zionism confronted with an event of a certain degree of universal significance; and, in the profound belief in Divine Providence governing and directing even the minutest human action, many people regarded this as a case of the "finger of G-d", as an omen, a Heavenly sign to the effect

that Zionism had been endorsed by Heaven. Even more was this felt after Britain had received the Mandate over Palestine from the League of Nations, and sent Sir (now Lord) Herbert Samuel as its first High Commissioner to Jerusalem. Sir Herbert (enthusiastically designated as "First Governor of Judea" (Hanatziv harishon li-Yehuda) by some poetically inclined writers of the day), walked on his first Day of Atonement in Jerusalem all the way from the High Commissioner's Residence on top of a hill on Mount Scopus in the far North of the City, to the "Churva" Synagogue in the Old City, which is in the East of the City, and was there called to the Torah for "Maftir". He was moved to tears when pronouncing the words "on his (David's) Throne no stranger will sit". One can easily imagine that all these dramatic events aroused Messianic hopes in the heart of many. Many people in Jerusalem will still remember that some congregations included in the portion of the Kaddish containing the prayer for Messianic redemption—the words "during the lifetime of Eliezer the son of Menahem" (Lord Samuel's Hebrew name)—a form used in ancient days for the Princes of Judea.

AND THE WONDER COME TO PASS

This may be the appropriate place to discuss, however briefly, a problem which has during recent years become a topic of quite heated debate among the Jewish public, particularly since the days of the Sinai-Suez campaign—the question of “Miracles or no Miracles”, etc. As has been said, the Balfour Declaration, as well as subsequent political developments, was regarded by many as a “miracle”—a view which was strongly opposed by others.

Without going into a detailed examination of the problem, may the following remark be made: those who so heatedly debate this question—on either side—are not really discussing the topic actually under dispute. What happens in the secret heights of the Almighty is no concern of ours. The metaphysical appraisal of one event or the other is a theoretical, subtle and delicate question which is not the actual topic under discussion. The problem confronting us and which concerns us can be only this: What is the *lesson* to be derived by us from these various events? This question can, according to the Torah and its view, be answered only on the basis of one criterion: are the consequences in accordance with the Torah and its commandments? According to the view of the Torah, nothing whatsoever in the world, no event, no man, not even a miracle-performing prophet, can justify the abolition of even one iota of the Torah.

“If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams—and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the *wonder come to pass* whereof he spoke unto thee—saying: Let us go after the gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them: thou shalt not

hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams; for the L-rd thy G-d putteth you to proof, to know whether ye do love the L-rd your G-d”, etc. (Deut. 13, 2-4). And, as our Sages teach us, the same rule applies even if the prophet advocates on the basis of his truly prophetised “sign or wonder”—the abandonment of even one Commandment of the Torah, or even one Rabbinical enactment. The “sign or wonder”, mind you, according to our commentators (see, for example, Nachmanides a.l.) has to be one constituting an interference with the normal course of nature! Yet, the Talmud teaches us: “Even though he may make the sun stand still in the middle of the sky—thou shalt not hearken unto him” (Sanhedrin 90a). Accordingly, even if convincing proof could be provided to the effect that the Balfour Declaration constituted a genuine “sign and wonder” in Halachic terms, that, say, a fiery angel had been seen to have appeared to Lord Balfour prior to his statement to the House on that 2nd day of November, and if, on the basis of such a genuine miracle, the request had been made that the Zionist view should be acknowledged—nevertheless, according to the Torah, this would not constitute proof of the truth of Zionism but only a test “whether ye do love”, etc.

This principle is just as valid in connection with the far more significant events that took place during the early period of the State of Israel and its wars—Sinai campaign, etc.—, but I have preferred to apply it to an event about which the distance of time renders a more dispassionate analysis possible.

Whether or not the Balfour-Declaration has been of great benefit to the Jewish People at large—this question is generally agreed to be still subject to discussion. Even within the Zionist camp there is no unanimity in this respect—but this, again, goes beyond our topic. One thing,

however, was without a doubt newly created as a result of the Balfour Declaration as far as Torah-true Judaism is concerned: an abundance of *new tasks*. There was no change in attitudes and views, for these are not subject to changes but, since Zionism had then started activities on a new and more practical level, it became evident that, on the Torah-true side as well, new steps would have to be taken to meet the challenge of the new situation. What should these steps be? Should an organized body be established, equipped with all the accessories of a political organization, in order to counteract the Zionist organization, or should rather all efforts be dedicated to furthering, deepening and preserving the Torah spirit on both a local and individual basis? This was, indeed, a subject of debate. It is against that background that "Agudath Israel" had been founded back in 1912 and renewed its activities after the war with the majority of its membership concentrated in Germany and some parts of Poland, while on the other hand, some other Torah-true Jews (mainly in Hungary, Galicia and to a certain degree in Lithuania) opposed that organization on the grounds that the shape of a modern political organization for the cause of Torah would finally endanger Torah itself. These developments are very interesting—but this is not the place to go into them.

In addition, there were differences of opinion in orthodox quarters (both inside and outside Agudath Israel) as to what attitude should be taken towards the practical work of the new "Yishuv" in Palestine. Should encouragement be given to "hachshara" and to the immigration to Palestine of "pioneers" (Halutzim), etc., in order to strengthen Torah observance on the holy soil, or should orthodox Jewry preferably refrain from such activities on the grounds that they might both be misinterpreted as consent to the ideological background of such "pioneer-work" and also expose devout young people going through the process

of "hachshara" and "aliya" to corruption of their ideological attitude? Reference, of course, is here being made only to such parties—on both sides—who sincerely believed in their own views, and not to those whose views and preachings were dictated solely by political, personal or even financial interests. However, even these differences of opinion, as far as they were shared by people who honestly believed in the views they advocated—were *not* disputes about the attitude towards Zionism itself. On the contrary, those who advocated immigration to Palestine, etc., considered it all the more imperative to emphasize their objection to Zionism. As an example, let us mention the late Dr. Isaac Breuer, who was THE spokesman par excellence of the so-called "pro-Palestinian" trend. He it was who had coined the phrase describing Zionist work in Palestine as "a national home for paganism".

In 1937, while the Arab riots were still going on in Palestine, the 3rd World Congress (Knessiah Gedolah) of Agudath Israel was held at Marienbad, Czechoslovakia. A comparatively short while earlier, the British Royal Commission for Palestine, headed by the late Lord Peel, had publicly made known its recommendations to H.M. Government for the solution of the problem of Jews and Arabs in Palestine by means of Partition. These recommendations, for the first time in mandatory history, mentioned the words "Jewish State" not merely as a bombastic phrase, but as a practical proposal. To be sure, these words referred only to a small portion of the British Mandated Territory of Palestine—smaller than the area defined in the resolution of the U.N. General Assembly of November 29, 1947—but still "a Jewish State". Had this proposal not excluded Jerusalem from the borders of the "Jewish State", it would certainly have aroused a tremendous wave of enthusiasm for the dawn of redemption, etc. Indeed, there were many who did regard Lord Peel's pro-

posal with great enthusiasm. Perhaps not many readers will remember the fact that Mr. Ittamar ben Avi, for example, then published a periodical in Tel Aviv (of which only few numbers appeared) carrying the dateline "In the Year One of the redemption of Israel".

The Zionist Congress, which also met in the summer of 1937 in Zurich, Switzerland, was completely dominated by what was then referred to as the "yes or no" question (i.e. what should the answer of Zionists to the Peel proposals be—yes or no?). Naturally, the World Congress of the Agudah was likewise concerned with the very same question, although the approach and the scope of discussion were entirely different. The main problem with which the Zionist Congress saw itself confronted, was whether the proposed partition of Palestine should be accepted although it meant renouncing Jewish jurisdiction over large areas of Palestine—including Jerusalem—or whether it should be opposed on grounds of the loss of these areas? The problem under discussion at the Knessiah Gedola of Agudath Israel in Marienbad did not centre around the boundary lines as proposed by Lord Peel but around the very question of the existence of a Zionist "Jewish State" in the Holy Land, regardless of boundaries. It is an interesting fact that the decision of the Knessia Gedola was a clear-cut "no", and in this negative decision there was no conflict whatsoever between those who were in favor of the immigration of "chalutzim" to Palestine or those who were against it. Even the delegates from the very few "kibbutzim" then owned by Agudath Israel in Palestine equally supported the negative attitude. The late Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzensky of Wilna—who was also not considered an "extremist"—stated in his letter to the Knessiah Gedola (which he could not personally attend on account of his frailty), that "even if that state becomes a reality, it would at most be a state ruled by Jews, but

never a Jewish State”.

The text of the resolution of the Rabbinical Council (Moetzeth Gedolei Hatora) that was unanimously adopted, read as follows: “A Jewish state not based on the principles of Torah is a denial of Jewish origin, is opposed to the identity and to the true stature of our People, and undermines the basis of existence of our People”. Resolution No. 1 of the Political Commission (also unanimously adopted) reads: “The Knessiah Gedola cannot lend its consent to the JEWISH STATE as proposed by the Peel Commission”. The resolution did not refuse its consent to the Peel Proposals but only to the JEWISH STATE contained in these proposals. (Quotations made from the official text (Yiddish) as published by Zeirei Agudath Israel of Riga, Latvia, 1938)

THE GREAT DISASTER AND THE POSTWAR ERA

The great disaster of World War II and the destruction of European Jewry are events the full meaning of which none of us can yet grasp up to this day—some fifteen years later. All that has been spoken, written and said in this respect is only as a mere phrase compared with its true impact, for all the statements on it have already become so commonplace as to be devoid of meaning. Nor is it our intention here to repeat or even to make an attempt to give verbal expression to the feelings of grief and agony that certainly fill every Jewish heart whenever the memory of the great disaster comes to mind. Here we shall dwell upon these matters only inasmuch as they have a direct and immediate bearing on our topic.

The disaster was not only a massacre of six millions out of sixteen millions; with it, the central and main artery of life of the Jewish People was severed. If, after this terrible disaster, the Jewish people survived at all, it is one of the most miraculous mysteries beyond the comprehension of human reason and an additional tangible proof of the meta-historical character of the Jewish People which is not only *not* a nation like other nations, but constitutes a unique entity, a special creation of G-d “the People which I have created for Myself”—as we have tried to explain earlier.

After the catastrophe, all the surviving remnants in the camps were broken physically, morally and spiritually, and—bitterly disappointed. Throughout the holocaust, they had nourished the hope that when the fortunate hour should finally strike, they would find themselves re-united

with the assembly of their Jewish brethren, that they would find the remnants, however few and broken, of the "Klal Yisroel" in which they had grown up, for participation in which they had been tortured and bereaved. Instead they found a multitude of arrogant busybodies as the self-appointed leaders and spokesmen for World Jewry, more often than not with additional and very dubious ulterior motives.

Never throughout the Nazi holocaust and thereafter have Zionist leaders ceased their string-pulling maneuvres. When the entire Jewish people was stunned with agony by the terrible fate of their brethren—which had penetrated the Zionist-wrought curtain of silence when it was already too late to help—the time was considered ripe for continuing the process of "wholesale surgery" whereby the Jewish people was to be transformed into a "normal nation", for forcibly putting "an end to Galuth" through the establishment of the Jewish State.

This "string-pulling" throughout the era of massacre and thereafter contains various chapters which should have been, and undoubtedly will one day be, recorded and discussed. Some of these facts emerged during the Kastner trial which was held in Jerusalem several years ago. Public discussion of them still goes on. Interesting and vital as this subject may be—it is not part of our topic. Nonetheless, it may be worth while to relate here one "small" but typical example which I have heard myself from the late Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandl, THE reliable witness of this entire tragedy (A man who was called 'the righteous one' even by the Attorney General of Israel Mr. Chaim Cohen—see "Criminal File 124" ed. Yediot Acharonot, Tel Aviv).

Rabbi Weissmandl once told me the following story: The first piece of information about the existence and nature of the extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau

was received early in 1942, through two young Slovak Jews (the so-called "Protectorate" of Slovakia was the first country under the Nazi orbit to send Jews to extermination camps) who had miraculously managed to escape back to Slovakia. They presented detailed testimony, figures, maps, diagrams and all, records of which were taken in the presence of a neutral Consular official (the document has already in part been published in several periodicals, and has now been published in its entirety in the memoirs of Rabbi Weissmandl). Through various devices, at the risk of his own life and safety, Rabbi Weissmandl managed to send this document to the representatives of "World Jewry" (the Jewish Agency, the JDC etc.) in Switzerland. An answer was finally received after long waiting: "I have handed your letter over to Chayim (Weitzman), and he will greatly enjoy it. It will help us get the State"

In his memoirs (just now published), Rabbi Weissmandl quotes the original text of a letter received from the same Zionist representation in Switzerland, in reply to a plea for help addressed to them by Mrs. Gizella Fleischman, a veteran Zionist and an active rescue worker during the war. Her plea also contained explicit directions as to how help could be given, etc. The answer was "All allied nations shed the blood of their sons in the war effort. What we want is a Jewish State, and ("rak b'dam tih'ye lanu ha'aretz") only with blood will we get the country". Those who so eloquently accuse others of "blood-libel" for mentioning these facts, had better read Rabbi Weissmandl's book and the documentation contained therein. But, we repeat, it is not our intention here to go into this matter. The above examples were only quoted in order to illustrate the trend of Zionist thought.

The above-mentioned representative of the Jewish Agency was right, after all. The great disaster in Europe

and the desperate situation of its remnants in Refugee camps after the war served as a trump card in the hands of the Zionist leadership in negotiations in the corridors of the UN, in the White House in Washington and in other world-capitals. On November 29th, 1947, the United Nations' General Assembly with a two-thirds majority of votes ratified the resolutions calling for the partition of Palestine, involving the establishment of a sovereign Jewish State on part of the territory of the former Palestine Mandate.

THE STATE BECOMES A REALITY

It is not surprising that, in view of the desperate situation of Jewish DP's in the various camps on the one side, and in view of the extensive propaganda carried on in the camps by a swarm of Zionist emissaries of every denomination on the other—often accompanied by threats—the news about the approval of the Jewish State should have evoked a tide of joy in very many Jewish quarters. It is likewise obvious that the most vociferous joy was experienced by those for whom the State entailed no obligations—save a few (income tax deductible) dollars—i.e. American Zionists. It is equally true that with the establishment of the State the liquidation of DP camps was expedited and that many of the immigrants experienced, at least temporarily, a marked feeling of relief as a result of their migration. Yet, the Torah view towards the State could not change from what it always had been with regard to Zionism. The State is nothing but a logical sequence of Zionism, is its entire *raison d'être*. Zionism struggled for the State in order to “solve the Jewish Problem”, as part of the program of “normalization of the Jewish People”. Through the establishment of the State, this goal was finally reached.

As we have tried to explain in the beginning of this work, the State of Israel is not one of those States which

had in ancient times been founded as kingdoms, and continued to survive with one regime or another attaining power in successive stages. The State of Israel belongs to the category of states which are identical with their regime. It is the regime that makes the State and it is the State that makes the regime. Thus, Israel is not a State governed by Zionists or Zionism, but the State of Israel is Zionism in practice. Until May 14, 1948, the Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency held the power of organizations or parties, and since the 14th of May, 1948, the Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency have together acquired the status and the power of a sovereign State. This, of course, has changed their measure of strength and reinforced their ability to enforce their authority but it has not changed the nature and identity of the movement. A red-haired man, for instance, who wins the Irish Sweepstake and grows rich overnight, will most probably experience, through this sudden wealth, a change in his pattern of every-day life. On account of his riches, he may perhaps be more careful in his manners or more careless than when he had been poor, but, whatever the case, he remains the same red-haired man he had been before, for his identity has not been changed by his good fortune.

It is obvious that the existence of the State brought about a new objective situation involving new problems, and simultaneously, the need for new ways of reaction. The main difference between the Zionist Organization and the State lies in the fact that the former is an organization built on membership and voluntary affiliation. Those who do not want to do so, can refuse to join its ranks. Even when, during the Mandatory era, Zionism was granted authority over the officially—recognized Jewish “Religious Community” of which every Jewish resident of the Mandated Territory of Palestine automatically

became a member on his 18th birthday, the British authorities finally, after an appeal to the League of Nations, recognized the right of every person to renounce such automatic membership by filing an appropriate statement. One cannot however quit a State unless one leaves its boundaries, and in any event, this is not as easy a matter as quitting or non-affiliation with a congregation or organization. The question of what Torah-true Jewry—particularly those living in Israel—should do in practice in view of the reality of the State is therefore neither easy nor simple. The State is not merely a point of view but a reality. It is composed—after all—of Jews, and with regard to Jewish individuals, no matter who or what they are, the duty of common responsibility always exists. In this connection, it may be typical to point out that it is just the group known as “Neturei Karta” which is accused more frequently than any other religious group of separatism, isolation, etc. that is usually the first to protest, sometimes most fiercely, against violations of the Sabbath, etc.—a protest based solely and entirely on this feeling of the mutual responsibility of all Jews for one another, while the more moderate quarters that profess extreme loyalty to the very same slogan of brotherhood and mutual responsibility, are more apathetic with regard to such desecrations of Torah laws. In other words, those accused of isolation who might consequently be expected not to care for anybody but themselves, are very much concerned with the conduct of others—and vice versa. Accordingly, even those who openly abrogate any allegiance to the State—even to the extent of refusing “de facto” recognition (see later)—feel themselves strongly bound (stronger perhaps than others) by the feeling of “arevus” (mutual responsibility) towards the other inhabitants of the State.

Moreover, the State is located on the soil of the Holy Land—which remains holy, “the palace of the King”—

regardless of who its temporary ruler may be. Every desecration of the Torah on the holy soil of Eretz Israel hurts and shocks to a greater extent than similar acts committed anywhere else—hence, the duty of protesting also becomes more compelling. Thus, in addition to the negative attitude that has to be adopted towards the State as a materialization of Zionism, there is, on the other hand, the positive duty of protest deriving from the holiness of the Land on the one side and the mutual responsibility of all Jews on the other.

How and what should this protest be? What steps should Torah true Jews take—both inside the country and abroad—in view of the existing reality? It is around these questions that opinions differ, and no wonder. “As their faces are different so are their views different”, the Talmud teaches us with regard to human nature in general. The situation is complicated enough. The problems sometimes touch on most delicate and subtle matters; and it is therefore only natural that there should be different approaches and proposals concerning the practical steps to be taken. Yet with regard to the principle underlying the negative attitude, **THERE ARE NOT AND THERE CANNOT BE DIVERGENT VIEWS WITHIN THAT PART OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE THAT REGARDS AND RECOGNIZES THE TORAH AS ITS ONLY AND EXCLUSIVE BASIS.** At this point, we shall have to touch upon one additional subject:

THE REALITY OF THE STATE

We have until now dealt with all these problems from a theoretical angle. We have tried to explain that the negative attitude towards the State mainly emanates from ideological considerations to which all other arguments are only secondary. Although it is not our intention here—as outlined in the introduction—to enter into any polemic or political argument, yet this treatise would be left incomplete without a mention, however brief, of the practical part of the problem. After all, it is an existing reality which we are discussing and not only a theory.

Dr. Isaac Breuer, the Agudist thinker, once defined the aim of Zionism as “a national home for paganism, with a little room left for the Almighty”. This definition is applicable also to the State of Israel. From the day of its inception, the rulers of the State have engaged in systematic and deliberate eradication of the Torah with all the means at their disposal, including persuasion, fraud, violence, terror, blackmail and, if necessary, even bloodshed.

It is not the intention of this writer in referring to all those well-substantiated facts, to draw up a list of anti-Torah acts whether committed through legislation, e.g. the Women’s Conscription Act or the “Working Hours” Law (authorizing the Minister of Labour to “permit work on Sabbaths”) etc., or, in everyday life, committed with violence for no purpose other than provocation, e.g. the Dancing Club in Meah Shearim, the Swimming Pool and, first and foremost, the brutal estrangement of hundreds of thousands of innocent Jews—mainly children—from their faith through every type of terror—a policy once

described by a prominent Zionist leader and Israeli member of Cabinet (the late D. Pincus) as "genocide". All these tragic facts and many more are certainly among the things that ought to be compiled, well-documented and publicized—documentation exists and is available—but, again, that is outside the scope of this work.

Moreover, even in the one field in which the State often likes to boast of its "Jewishness" i.e. the field of Rabbinical jurisdiction in matters of marital status, the truth is in diametrical opposition to the State's claims. Not only do the Rabbis in Israel (and I mean here the officially recognized Chief Rabbinate, let alone others) have at present fewer rights and less jurisdiction than used to be granted (and in some countries is still being granted) to Rabbis in most European countries until World War II, but they enjoy fewer rights nowadays than they used to enjoy under the Mandate. I would particularly call the attention of the reader in this respect to an interesting article written several years ago by Dr. Goitein, one of Israel's leading jurists and diplomats in the American "Bnei Brith Monthly" under the title "Is Israel Priest-ridden?", in which he proves that the rights of Rabbis had been confirmed by the State of Israel only in order to preserve the "status quo" of the Mandate, and that these rights are being diminished from year to year. Since the publication of that article, this policy has continued. The fact that the Rabbis are paid by the Government (as, incidentally, is the case also in some countries behind the Iron Curtain) is of no greater importance—as far as this principle goes—than the fact that their photos are often published in newspapers and magazines. The more the decorative side of the Rabbinate is emphasized, the fewer do their actual rights become.

At this point, one further detail should be mentioned, that eloquently symbolises the state as a true expression

of nationalism i.e. the very existence of a "Ministry Religions". With the establishment of that Ministry, official confirmation was given to the fact that Zionism as embodied in the State of Israel considers Torah as one "religion" of many. This fact by itself, which should indeed have served as an eye opener to many, has not only failed to do so but, by some irony, there are still people who use this very same fact in order to prove how "religious" the State is . . .

This "Ministry of Religions" or, better still, under its French name (French being a semi-official language in Israel)—"Ministère des *Cultes* (sic!)", deals with the other "cults" on a purely administrative level and in a routine manner as in similar government offices in other countries, but handles the Jewish "cult" in a manner which is, to put it very mildly, reckless indeed. It composes prayers, arranges "religious ceremonies" issues "regulations" as to when Hallel should be said and when selichot should be said in prayers, etc. The "headquarters" of this Ministry on Mount Zion, apart from attracting innocent Yankee tourists or equally innocent Yemenite newcomers, is gradually becoming the laughing stock of the entire country, regardless of affiliation.

Truly, the "religious" room in the huge building of paganism most eloquently testifies to the character of the entire building . . .

* * *

As has been said, it is not our intention to enumerate here all such events and situations, nor to describe the "religious situation" in the State of Israel. Nobody will deny that it is very pitiable, and that there is deliberate anti-religious action. The question to be considered now is how to appraise this situation. A mistake quite frequently made is to see the root of the problem in the fact that the State of Israel has a "non-religious majority", and that,

if there were a "religious majority", the situation would be different. In the first place, this claim can be disproved even from the merely factual angle. Contrary to what many people think, the State of Israel of the present day has an *overwhelming religious majority* in terms of figures. One does not have to be an expert in statistics or mathematics to figure this out. It is simple arithmetics. When the Mandate was terminated, about half a million Jews lived in Palestine. The population of the State is now approaching the two million mark. Thus, over a million —to be exact, about a million and a half new immigrants have so far come to the country. Where did they all come from? To be sure, the first immigrants came from D.P. Camps in Europe and several other European countries. They too included a considerable percentage of observant Jews. However, the entire European immigration (including even the newest Roumanian arrivals) barely amounted to half a million. All the rest came from Oriental Countries—Yemen, Morocco, Iran, Iraq, etc.—and those were practically *all* Torah observant. Thus, there is a "religious majority" in the State, and, if this is not noticeable in the political representation and leadership of the country, the reasons for that are matters of regime, of party-politics, economy, etc., which go beyond our topic. The fact that power in the State is held by those who now hold it, certainly adds bitterness to the problem, but does not constitute its root. It is certainly NOT THIS FACT WHICH DETERMINES THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE STATE.

What has been said earlier with regard to Zionism, holds good all the more with regard to the State. It is not because the power is held by the irreligious that the State is opposed to Torah, but the other way round. Because the entire concept of the State is contrary to Torah, only irreligious men could be its founders and leaders. The

“religious” are only satellites (as we shall explain at greater length in our chapter on “Religious Zionism”). The very existence of a State with a Parliament authorized to decide matters of Torah and Divine commandments by a majority-vote, IS DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO TORAH, EVEN IF SUCH VOTE SHOULD ALWAYS BE “IN FAVOUR” OF TORAH!

In other words the argument so often heard “Why did not the ‘religious’ establish the State?” is absurd. As unpopular as it may sound nowadays, it still remains a fact (as has been explained above with regard to Zionism) that if Torah-true Jews had been the ones to decide—THEY WOULD NEVER HAVE FOUNDED A STATE! It is a fact—which many people like to conceal and are ashamed of—that the Torah authorities everywhere were explicitly opposed to the establishment of a Jewish State. As was mentioned above, a resolution in this direction had been adopted by the World Congress of Agudath Israel in Marienbad in 1937—though even then Agudath Israel did not constitute the most “extremist” wing of orthodoxy with regard to Zionism. Needless to say, the other Rabbinical leaders, standing to the “right” of Agudath Israel, subscribed even more emphatically to the same view.

For the State, as has been said, is nothing but an organic part of Zionism, its natural sequence. The State could never have grown on any ground but that of Zionism. The State constitutes a further step in the process of “normalization” or “transformation” of the Jewish People from “this People which I have created for Myself” into “a nation like all nations”. It is the same “Jewish Nationalism” that regards the Jewish People as a “national entity” along the non-Jewish pattern, that regards Galuth only as a development of “historical events” and the State as the “solution of the Jewish Problem”. Just as it is—

from the Torah viewpoint—a falsification and worse to regard the Jewish People as a “nation like all nations”, to consider L’shon Hakodesh its “national language” and Eretz Israel as its “national home”, in the same manner, and even more so does it constitute a forgery of the worst kind to present the State as “the redemption” or—by way of compromise—as “the dawn of redemption”. For the State is in truth only another link in the chain of metamorphosis of the precepts from Divine sanctity through un-Jewish secularization, into non-Jewish concepts. No wonder that only relatively few are aware of these tremendous differences which are mainly spiritual, and no wonder therefore that within many orthodox quarters a total and unprecedented confusion prevails.

It can be said in favour of the leaders and founders of the State that *they* have never concealed their true intention. Mr. Ben Gurion in his speeches incessantly emphasizes the aspiration of the State to build “a new nation” and that of the Israeli Army, whose main purpose it is, to serve as a “melting pot” for the “new nation”.

This writer, incidentally, suggested already ten years ago that it is against this background that we could understand the true meaning behind the importation to Israel of Karaites, Samaritans, Sabbatheans and all the other sects that are not considered as Jews under the Law of the Torah, and—on the other hand—the almost forcible encouragement of Reform in Israel—an article for which there is neither the need nor the demand from any part of the population.

The recent controversy around the question of “Who is a Jew” should have demonstrated even to the blind the basic aspiration of the State to transform the identity of the Jewish People. For, from the Zionist view that regards the Jewish People as “a nation among nations”, the attitude maintained by Israel’s rulers is entirely justified.

This approach, similar to that of other nations, regards "nationality" as a matter independent of and more important than "religion". Why then should consideration be given to limitations imposed by "religion" on the definition of "national" identity? Is it not a fact, for example, that one of the greatest German writers happened to be a Frenchman by birth—Adalbert von Chamisso? The world of today no more believes in the "racial theory"; and "national affiliation", according to non-Jewish precepts, is mainly a question of cultural identity. Why then should the son of a Catholic mother not be considered as a good "Israeli" or even a good "Jew"—even though his mother be a Catholic or he himself even belong to the Catholic Church. Without any attempt at participation in the party-political controversy around this question, it may be stated that this controversy itself, even the very fact of its emergence, symbolizes and stresses the true character of the State as the implementing tool of Zionism.

It is also against this background that we should understand the emergence of the group of so-called "Canaanites". To be sure, they constitute a negligible minority as an organization. Spiritually, however, theirs is the basic trend of large sections—if not the majority—of the Sabrah "intelligentsia". The ideology of the "Canaanites" can be briefly summarized as follows: The Jewish population of Israel constitutes a separate national entity. It has only cultural ties with World Jewry. It should try to be integrated culturally and politically among the neighbouring nations. In other words, they openly advocate secession from the Jewish people. These young people, indeed, are like the child in the famous tale who shouted that the King was naked. Their theory is in fact, logically derived from Zionist theory. One basic fact which they admit, and which Zionism does not is that Judaism

is identical with Torah; and since they have been brought up to abandon and detest Torah, they feel the logical need to get rid of all that is reminiscent of Judaism. There is a direct line that connects early Zionist leaders, like Berdichevski—with these “Canaanites”— the “jeunesse dorée” of the contemporary State of Israel.

* * *

It is evident that *ideologically speaking* the attitude of Torah Judaism towards the State cannot differ from its attitude towards Zionism. The difference as far as it does exist is that the negative attitude towards the State has become more outspoken and determined, since the State has raised practical questions as opposed to the largely theoretical issues raised by Zionist ideas. It is likewise obvious that all recent efforts to eradicate religion through persecution are not *causes* but logical *results* of the very nature of the State. If one tries to make a man wear a garment too small for his measurements, it is only natural that the garment bursts wherever the man may turn—at the back, at the sleeves, at the front and the shoulders. This does not mean that the tailor had taken the wrong measurements but that the entire garment does not fit at all as it had not been made for that person in the first place. Similarly, the pattern of “a nation among nations” is entirely foreign to the Jewish people. When forcibly compelled to wear that “coat”, it must burst at the seams, whether the seams consist of the conscription of women or of the alienation of children from their faith, etc.

One might here again quote Rabbi M. B. Weissmandl who once very eloquently defined the situation in the course of a conversation with a certain Zionist leader. The conversation was held in German; and Rabbi Weissmandl, with his typically dry humour remarked: “*Ihr habt eine Weltreligion für ein Paraguay eingetauscht*”

(You have exchanged a universal religion for a Paraguay). Yet, the Torah does not allow itself to be squeezed into the frame of a "Paraguay"—hence it is the cause of permanent friction. Neither the "non-religious majority" nor any particular person or persons should be held responsible personally or collectively for this friction. All may be guilty of having embittered the atmosphere of the argument—and I certainly do not intend here to minimize that guilt. Yet, the principal culprit is not any particular person. The root of the trouble lies in the absolute character of the antithesis between Torah and Zionism or, as one must put it nowadays, between Torah and the State of Israel.

DIFFERENCES OF APPROACH

Thus, the attitude towards the State could only be a frankly negative one, as has been explained. However, as has also been explained, it is not an easy thing to find a way for the practical expression of this negative—hence the difference in approach. It is not our intention here to go into these differences, and certainly not to take sides in this respect. However, failure to point out at least the major trends crystallized during recent years in the Torah-true camp, would involve leaving too unsatisfactory a picture of the situation.

Before we try to describe the existing trends, it is worth while dwelling a minute upon a trend that does *not* exist. It might well have been assumed that the anti-Torah structure of the State—with brutal outbreaks occurring periodically—would generate a trend in favour of mass-emigration from Israel. Interesting enough, such a trend does not exist. To be sure, there is a substantial wave of emigration from Israel, and among the numerous emigrants there is also a certain percentage of observant Jews although they are very far from constituting even a large percentage let alone a majority of emigrants. Even of those, however, only a very small part is affiliated with so-called “extremist” circles, and, even among that very small group, practically no one has ascribed his motive for emigration to spiritual or religious causes but rather to economic or family reasons.*) There is no indication of a religious movement in favour of emigration. This is in itself quite an interesting fact, and therefore worth mentioning here. Its explanation is doubtless to be found in the Jew’s inherent love for the Holy Land, which cannot be quenched by opposition to the State.

* This writer happens to have first-hand acquaintances with these matters through his professional work in translating documents.

Before going on to discuss the various existing trends within orthodox Jewry, another introductory remark, which equally applies to all other parts of this work, should be made. There is a basic rule in the Law of the Torah, or, more exactly, two rules that combine into one: in the language of the Talmud, "we are not concerned with the wicked" and "we are not concerned with the fools". This means that all rules set up, all cases dealt with, etc., are based on the assumption that the persons concerned are morally and mentally sound. Consequently, we are not discussing here words, statements, proclamations and slogans that are motivated by calculations of personal gain, clandestine intrigues or party-politics and solely guided by such interests—regardless of whether those who utter them, are strong or weak at the moment of this writing. Neither are we concerned here with persons lacking intellectual maturity, who cling to outworn bombastic phrases. We are concerned here only with serious trends held by persons with a sense of responsibility and of full mental and intellectual maturity. Within such quarters, two major trends may be discerned in spite of various minor divergencies in regard to details.

One trend advocates complete abstention by Torah true Jews from everything directly or indirectly connected with the State—including even (at least theoretically) the use of vital services supplied by the State, such as post, currency, ration-books, etc. Consequently, this trend also demands non-participation in elections to Parliament or even municipalities. From a purely theoretical viewpoint, this trend is largely justified. From a practical point of view, however, the majority of Torah true Jews cannot act on this principle. The second trend favours a policy which was once ably defined by the late Dr. Breuer (during the debate on the Peel-Partition Plan in Marienbad, see above) in the following terms: "Any recognition

which we may give such a State" he then said, "could be only 'de facto' but never 'de jure'". According to the followers of this trend, whereas a complete boycott of all services of the State cannot be implemented in practice by most people and whereas the vast majority of the country's inhabitants are in any event forced to use these services by paying taxes, registering for military service (even Yeshiva-students and Rabbis who are exempted have to appear at state offices in order to receive exemption) etc., etc., there can be no objection to their using the opportunity given them by the right to vote in order to elect such representatives to the legislative institutions as would protect the rights of Torah wherever possible, and would, at least, be able to voice a more effective protest from the rostrum of the Knesset—provided, of course, that they take no step involving participation in "collective responsibility" for the regime as a whole (e.g. by joining a coalition-cabinet). Whether or not, throughout the various elections held by the State of Israel, Knesset deputies who have lived up to this criterion, have been elected, is another question

In any event, even such "de facto" recognition, whatever one's opinion concerning its political wisdom might be, does not affect in any way the question of "de jure" non-recognition. The followers of both trends maintain a completely negative attitude towards the State. The differences centre solely around the practical steps to be taken.

Although this point seems quite simple and logical, yet a vast amount of confusion on the subject prevails on various sides; and I shall therefore try to illustrate this matter further through an example taken from the everyday-life of contemporary American Jewry.

There are no differences of opinion in Orthodox quarters regarding their appraisal of Conservative or Reform Judaism. Let us now assume that a certain orthodox young

man is offered a position as a teacher at a Hebrew school affiliated to a Conservative congregation in the mid-West. (Such cases, incidentally, happen every day). Our young man will now be faced with the following problem. If he accepts the position, he can do a great deal for the spiritual salvation of the children both in his own class and in the entire school. Others who have done so, have succeeded in sending children to Yeshivos, etc. Moreover, he is assured full freedom of personal religious practice. On the other hand, he would not only personally endanger himself by mingling with a Conservative or Reform environment, but would create the erroneous impression that the standards of that environment are acceptable to orthodox Jews. He will consult a reliable Rabbi. The Rabbi's answer will, of course, depend upon the circumstances of the individual case, local conditions, persons involved, etc. There is at least the theoretical possibility that, under certain circumstances, the answer might be in the affirmative. This writer knows of cases where this has actually happened. Other Rabbis, of course, may hold other views; but the fact that the Rabbi in question permitted his young questioner to accept the position, can in no way be interpreted to mean that his attitude towards the movements of Reform or Conservativism as such is less resolutely negative than that of his colleagues.

This might also be the right opportunity to dwell at some length on the slogan frequently voiced in various religious quarters: "We are against the Government but for the State". This slogan is *not* the view of Torah-Jewry *nor* does it belong to either of the two aforementioned trends. It belongs rather to "Religious Zionism", (to which our next chapter will be dedicated), or to the two abovementioned categories "with which the Law is not concerned". For, in the view of Torah Jewry which has already been explained at length (hence, also in the

view of the second trend), the exact opposite is the case: It is the attitude towards the STATE that is outspokenly "contra", while the attitude towards its Government, though it is certainly not "pro", displays awareness that the Government remains an existing fact with which one has to "get along" one way or another willy-nilly. Sometimes it becomes necessary to fight against the Government; yet negotiations have to take place with the governing bodies, or with X or Y who hold one post or another, and, even more so, with major or minor officials in the different departments. In some area of practical detail an agreement may even be reached; but, as far as the "State" is concerned, the attitude can never be other than negative.

In terms of the above slogan, the differences of approach between the two trends exist only with regard to the 'Government'; in their objection to the "State" both trends are equally resolute.

“RELIGIOUS ZIONISM”

After reading all this, many will certainly ask: How can we regard Zionism and the State as diametrically opposed to Torah, while “religious Zionism” exists and while there certainly are many pious and observant Jews who adhere to Zionism and the State, which some even regard as “the dawn of redemption”?

We have now reached one of the most delicate and complicated aspects of this entire subject,—the discussion of which is all the more difficult because particularly in this area there is only a very narrow and sometimes hardly visible boundary between polemics which we should like to avoid, and ideological clarification which constitutes our purpose. The difficulty is increased by the atmosphere of intolerance now prevailing among the Jewish Public. Yet, the question cannot be evaded; for, without such discussion, we should be leaving too much unsaid.

In view of the delicacy of the subject and the heated atmosphere that now prevails, it may be as well to make an introductory remark which should normally have been self-evident, and which, of course, applies throughout our discussion, but which must be emphasized all the more in this connection. All that is being said here—both the words of praise and (particularly) those of criticism—is aimed solely and exclusively at ideas and views and by no means at those adhering to them. For, as has repeatedly been pointed out, our object here is clarification and not polemics. We are therefore dealing with ideas, not personalities. To quote a slogan taken from those very same quarters of religious Zionism (“Ayin be-Ayin”): “we are not for SOMEONE or against SOMEONE, but we are

for SOMETHING and against SOMETHING"

The question posed at the beginning of this chapter, though frequently heard, is, in fact, not a question at all. On analysis, it turns out to be an expression of surprise that two logically opposed views can be held on any one subject? It would appear to be based on the assumption that the subject under discussion is governed purely by logic, an assumption for which there is no evidence. Not all the events and trends we witness in our lives are to be explained by logic or even by common sense. The Sages of Kabbalah and Chassidism (see "Torah Or" on the portion of Vayera) have aptly compared the days of exile to a dream quoting "we were like unto those who dream" (Ps. 139): "Now, a dream unites two contradictory items in one subject and blends two opposites as if they were one" (ibid.)

During the days of exile when, to use Biblical language, the Divine Face is 'concealed', two opposites *can* occur in relation to one subject; and the rules of logic do not prevent the emergence of contradiction—particularly nowadays. In the life of American Jewry, for example—and not only in America—one can witness contradictions at every corner that are of such an illogical nature that they border on the grotesque. We have referred above to the habit of "kosher" Christmas parties which are—regrettably enough—in no manner confined only to the realm of humour but constitute, to a larger or smaller degree, part of the tragic reality of present-day Jewish America. American (and not only American . . .) "orthodox" Congregations hold mixed balls and dance-parties—a matter which has already become part of the routine of the "orthodox" American way of life—to such a degree that nobody pays any more attention to it. There you have the same paradox, with the same logical contradiction relating to one and the same subject. To return to our own

topic, the fact that a “religious Zionism” exists in no way proves that it has any logical basis. Earlier we referred to the example of the dream. Let us continue to apply it. The vision of the dream itself is not a true vision; it is not the result of physical sight but of a sort of imagination. Moreover, the Biblical verse on which this saying is built—“we were *like* unto those who dream”—provides only a comparison, i.e. *like* dreamers not real dreamers. That is to say, this union of contradictory elements is not much more than imaginary and superficial. A more thorough look will show us that they cannot really be united even though they might appear to relate to the same subject. The “kosher Xmas Party” will always fail either to be really kosher or really a “Xmas Party”. The same holds good of “religious Zionism”.

We have mentioned above the principle that we are not concerned with the wicked and the fools. “We are not concerned” means that we cannot draw conclusions from or use as evidence the deeds done by those who fall under these categories. On the other hand, it is an undeniable fact that such people exist in considerable quantity and that the world is full of both types. It may perhaps be said that the various trends within “Religious Zionism” can be classified under one or other of these two categories. For, as has just been pointed out, a union of two contradictory elements can only be superficial. Essentially, such a union is illusory, and one part or the other is in fact defective or non-existent. Either the “Torah” element is feeble or falsified,—and then it will be classifiable under the category of the “wicked”—or that element is not really affected and, then, the union occurs only as a result of a simple (let us call the child by its true name) weakness of the mind, which can justifiably be classified as “folly”.

Four major trends may perhaps be discerned within the

sphere which we have called "Religious Zionism" for the sake of brevity and convenience, but which actually extends far more widely than the "religious" parties that admit their affiliation with, and membership of, the Zionist Organization. Among all these four trends, there is really only one that clearly knows its own views. Although this is not always the case, some of its spokesmen do not hesitate at times to admit them openly though, perhaps, in circumspect language and in a tone of moderation. This one trend fully subscribes—admittedly or not—to the aim of Zionism and the State to transform the identity of the Jewish People into that of 'a nation among nations' with the Torah as its "religion" on a voluntary basis. Unlike other Zionists, however, the "personal view" of this particular group favours this "religion" but likewise considers—again, regardless of whether or not this is openly admitted—the Torah as a "religion". To quote again a phrase of Dr. Breuer, it agrees that the Almighty should be awarded one room in the huge building of paganism, but it would like that room to be attractively situated within the building. When all is said and done, this trend agrees, one way or the other, that "religion", is, after all, only "one room" in the great "National Home". Faithful to this view, this trend can regard the State as the "dawn of redemption", and the Galuth as either already or shortly to be a thing of the past; hence, it advocates the necessity for 'new forms of religious expression', that are no longer handicapped by the Shulchan Aruch of the Galuth, and the restoration of the Synhedrion for that and other purposes.

Without going into any soul-searching—let alone questioning the personal integrity of the adherents of this trend—they will themselves admit that, from the point of view of "Shulchan Aruch-Judaism", their view constitutes a very considerable deviation. The request for "new forms

of religious expression" and the negation of "Galuthism" both contradict the basic principles of "Shulchan Aruch-Judaism", according to which the State of Israel "also" belongs to the Galuth with doubled intensity, constituting as it does an exile within an exile; and the real "dawn of redemption" followed by the ultimate redemption, will come only through Elijah and the Messiah. Hence, the demand for "new forms" of religion inspired by the alleged "dawn of redemption" conflicts with the Shulchan Aruch no less radically than was the case with the demand for such "new forms" based on the "modern way of life" of the 19th century when it had been voiced by the various schools of Reform. It is not for us to pronounce judgment on the adherents of this view—but the view itself would certainly bring them within the category of the "wicked" from the standpoint of the Shulchan Aruch. In their case, therefore, it is the Zionist element that remains intact, while the Torah element is defective.

However, not all sections of "Religious Zionism" possess the courage and the clarity of mind that distinguishes this trend. There are many who combine the hope—certainly honest and pure—for the welfare and safety of Jews, embodied in their minds with a State that heralds the "dawn of redemption", with attachment to the Shulchan Aruch, which is so deeply engraved in their hearts that they cannot bring themselves to renounce it. In those hearts, there have arisen many doubts concerning the "dawn on redemption" in particular and Zionism in general, but they cannot or prefer not to pursue their doubts to their logical conclusion. Therefore, they remain stranded somewhere half-way, repelling all logical and factual arguments by a multitude of phrases and quotations from Talmudical or Biblical sources in praise of the Land of Israel, the Holy Tongue and the Jewish People, "the solitary sheep among seventy wolves" etc.

All these quotations, in the view of Shulchan Aruch Judaism, are, of course absolutely genuine. As we have tried to explain earlier, the Land of Israel, the People of Israel and the Holy Language are not merely spiritual concepts but elements in the original and ultimate purpose of Creation. Yet in this context all those quotations are entirely beside the point. Nobody denies the sanctity of the Land—certainly not the “ultra orthodox”, as they are so often labelled. “Neturei Karta”, the most extremely anti-Zionist group, consists almost exclusively of people who have been deeply rooted in the Holy Land for generations. The persistent attempts of “Religious Zionists” to confuse the issue reminds one of the story told about a certain Rabbi, very far removed from the affairs of this world, to whom a question—a “shaalo”—about the kashrus of a certain part of an animal just slaughtered was once put. “If this is a lung”—was the answer—“it is kosher”—but it turned out to be the liver . . .

As another more typical illustration, I would refer to the prayer-book recently published in Moscow which contains in the introduction a huge assembly of Talmudical quotations in praise of the virtue of Peace. This is intended to support communist-sponsored “peace”—propaganda. It is undoubtedly true that “Peace is great”, that “G-d has found no better vessel for blessings than Peace”; and all the other praises of Peace voiced by our Sages are no less true. Yet they do not constitute an argument in favour of the Communist “Peace” campaign; for the Peace lauded by our Sages and the “Peace” preached by Khrushtchev are two entirely different things. Similarly, opposition to Zionism on the part of devout Jews did not emanate from opposition to the Holy Land or to the Mitzvah of “Yishuv Eretz Yisroel” (even according to those Poskim who decreed that it does not apply in our days and did not include it among the 613 Mitzoth), and certainly not

from hatred toward the Jewish People—G-d forbid—, but quite the contrary: it emanates from an ardent desire to save and protect the Holiness of these concepts, which Zionism seeks to divest of their original meaning and to transform into something else! All the quotations from Talmudical and Biblical sources in praise of Eretz Israel etc., provide the real reason for the *opposition* to Zionism. Thus, if, despite all this, there exists a trend that professes to base its enthusiastic support of Zionism and the State—under whatever name—on the “Shulchan Aruch”, its existence points to a lack of intellectual maturity on the part of its adherents who deserve to be classified within the category of “fools”. (Again, it is the trend we are discussing and not the personalities of its adherents). In their case, what is missing is the clarity of the capacity for logical reasoning.

This trend of thought, which attempts to squeeze Zionist ideology into the mould of the “Shulchan Aruch”, sometimes leads to the grotesque, e.g. deliberations in typical Rabbinic style on problems such as “What should be done if Israeli Independence Day falls on “Taanith Sheni Bathra”?—a question that sounds almost as if it had been formulated for entertainment purposes, but which happens to have actually been discussed. This question serves as additional proof of the validity of the classification of that trend.

The third trend consists of the bulk of the adherents of “Religious Zionism”. Basically, this trend is identical with the second trend, but is distinguished from it by its more primitive level as well as by its greater degree of innocence and naïveté. This trend follows “religious Zionism”, because that is by far the more convenient course for both body and soul. There is really no room for discussion with this trend, for it has no ideology. As long as the two

former trends continue to exist, there will also be groups following them.

The fourth trend is formed of entirely different clay. These people are perfectly well acquainted with the nature of Zionism and the State, and their diametrical opposition to Torah. Moreover, even as far as the most innocent part of Zionism goes—the practical building of the country—they have done practically nothing or next to nothing. When the need presents itself, they do not hesitate to voice their non-Zionist attitude quite openly. However, they soon realized that one does not have to *do* anything for the State, or even the country, in order to become well-to-do, and they therefore “jumped on the bandwagon”. Out of purely political motives of “give and take”, a new “ideology” was born overnight, a “revised edition” of the second trend (with which it would not merge, again for business-reasons), with the fundamental difference that while, in the second trend, this ideology is the result of a certain degree of naïveté and illogical thinking, it here results from shrewd calculation. To provide an “ideological” guise for those calculations, the slogans “Zionism—no, State—yes” and “pro-State, anti-Government” were invented.

There is, of course no room for ideological discussion with this trend either—as apart from party-political discussion and polemics—since the main part of its “ideology” is built around practical considerations and should be sought in their sphere. Nor is this the proper place for it. The answers to all questions directed against this particular “ideology” are well known to these people no less than to others, and, what is more, when these very same political calculations so necessitate, the very same trend likes to present itself in the most brilliant colours of “extremism” and anti-Zionism.

Seeing that every Jew certainly desires in his heart of

hearts to be faithful to the Torah-view, may it therefore be permitted to this writer to offer his humble advice to all who come in contact with the latter trend. When they get into one of those "Zionist" moods and boast of their "patriotism," just don't believe them!

To summarize: Religious Zionism is a paradox. Zionism and the State are opposed to the view of Torah. All the multitude of Talmudical quotations in praise of Eretz Israel cannot alter the basic fact discussed in detail above, namely, that the State is the crown and the realization of Zionism, and the main instrument in its hands towards its one central goal, which is to transform the identity of the Jewish People into "a nation like all nations." This basic idea of the State and Zionism is what renders it "wrong" from the Torah-viewpoint. The fact that its practical realization—from the earliest days of Zionism until the present-day reality of the State of Israel—presents an uninterrupted chain of practical violations of Torah-laws certainly adds the bitterness, but it does not affect the root of the problem. Zionism is "wrong" from the Torah viewpoint, not because many of its adherents are lax in practice or even anti-religious, but because its fundamental principle conflicts with the Torah. The violation of Torah-laws, the sometimes brutal onslaughts against Torah in and by the State of Israel, are certainly deplorable from the Torah-viewpoint, but they are not the real reasons for the negative attitude towards the State. The reason for this attitude is the fact that the State is Zionism, as explained at the beginning.

Thus, Zionism—any blend of Zionism—would not become more "kosher" in the Torah-view if more of its adherents were to become observant Jews. Their observance certainly would be welcomed and would certainly add to their personal merit but it would not change the fact of their fundamental error.

THE SOLUTION?

As Torah and the State are diametrically opposed extremes, Torah Judaism can never accept Zionism, nor grant "de jure" recognition to the State. On the other hand, Zionism and the State will never condone the existence of a Judaism that insists exclusively on the original identity and character of the Jewish People, for, were it to do so, it would destroy the ground on which it is built. This may be the subconscious reason for the brutality and violence sometimes experienced in the State, which has recently been labelled by a veteran Zionist as "Jewish antisemitism".

What then is the solution of this problem?

The answer to be given here, according to the humble view of this writer, will certainly disappoint many; yet, I would be dishonest if I were to offer any other answer. The answer is very simple: **THERE IS NO HUMANLY FEASIBLE SOLUTION!**—if a radical and complete solution is expected. I can offer no push-button device to solve all problems and I do not believe that any other human being can. Nor is this the only problem, either in the world at large or in our Jewish world, for which no radical solution can be foreseen.

Throughout the years of Exile, when the leaders of the Jewish People were men of truth and integrity, the Jewish People never made any attempt to "solve the Jewish Problem", or, as far as that goes, any other universal problem. All Jewish political and communal activities of intercession ("shtadlanuth") throughout the many years of our exile—and those who conducted those activities were men of no less political maturity and breadth of outlook

than present-day politicians—were never aimed at an “overall solution” of the “Jewish Problem”. Their purpose was almost always immediate and locally to avert discriminatory laws or to protect certain rights etc. The true Jewish leaders realized that as they had not created the problems, they were unlikely to be able to find “solutions”.

“Old-fashioned” and outdated as this approach may seem, it is a fact worth consideration now that our own modern world is beginning to realize its validity. More than perhaps at any other time, practically all the major problems of today’s world are interwoven. A true and radical solution, say, of the Berlin Problem would only be possible through a sincere global abatement of the East-West conflict. Even co-existence is not a solution, only a “modus vivendi”. Even a slight glance at the minutes of the U.N. throughout its existence will show how correlated and interdependent all problems of the world are, and how there can be no final and overall solution for any one problem outside the framework of a global solution—which, in turn, seems to be very distant for all practical purposes. It is hardly surprising then that no real overall solution can be offered.

It is, therefore, more for the sake of curiosity that we propose to mention some of the “radical solutions” that have in the past been suggested in relation to our problem.

Some 8-9 years ago, a German-language newspaper in Tel Aviv (“Neueste Nachrichten—Yediot Chadoshot”) that is close to but does not officially represent the Progressive Party, suggested that a large concentration-camp be established somewhere in the Negev, where all “Neturei Karton”niks should be detained. This proposal has been subsequently repeated several times by the “Canaanites” (see above) and others.

Only quite recently, the Yiddish columnist Chaim Lieberman (who, incidentally, is considered religiously observant) proposed (in the "Jewish Daily Forward" of 19TH November 1958) "to cut off that cancer called 'Ssatmar' from the body of the Jewish People." This proposal in plain language can mean only one thing, namely, that the "concentration camp" suggested by "Neueste Nachrichten" should be turned into an extermination camp, for the only way to cut off a cancer is by a surgeon's knife.

Yet, all these proposals, even if they are accepted one day, will not even bring about the beginning of a solution. Even if the projected concentration camp in the Negev should contain not only the people openly affiliated with "Neturei Karta" but all the 150,000 residents of Jerusalem, clashes would soon break out in Haifa, Bnei Brak, Pardes Hanna, Hadera and at other places nobody would suspect. For the people of Neturei Karta may be using more drastic means than others, but as has been said above, as far as the basic view is concerned, it is shared by so many Jews that they cannot so easily be placed in a concentration camp; "Neturei Karta" did not create antagonism between Torah and Zionism seeing that this antagonism is mutually inherent in the very nature of Torah and of Zionism respectively.

At the other extreme, a proposal is sometimes voiced to enforce the decision to internationalize Jerusalem which was originally adopted by the UN General Assembly in its resolution of November 29, 1947 (which is, in terms of international politics, the *raison d'être* of the State of Israel) and was, at that time, officially and publicly accepted in Zionist quarters. *Those quarters that now support internationalization, hope that with the establish-

* Mr. Ben Zvi, now Israel's President then even published a linguistic treatise as to the appropriate Hebrew name for the international enclave.

ment of an international, UN-sponsored regime in Jerusalem, those orthodox Jews who so desire, would be able to retain a sort of international status, independent of the State of Israel. In addition to the fact that in practical terms this proposal has even less chances of being accepted than the former two proposals, it must be said that, even if it were accepted, it could, at most, *perhaps* bring about some alleviation of the condition of many Jews, but would not solve the problem as a whole. This writer does not believe that with the enforcement of that resolution, clashes would cease nor even that the Neturei Kart—let alone Jews outside Jerusalem and the State—would cease to protest. The basic antagonisms will thereby in no way be eliminated.

A radical solution, therefore, DOES NOT EXIST.

All that *can* be achieved—and it can, with some good will—is a “modus vivendi”, an arrangement that forbids provocation, violence, brutality or actions considered criminal under any code of Law, such as the forcible estrangement of children from the faith of their parents, etc. The initiative must come from the Government, which should refrain from initiating laws directed only at undermining the Torah and order its police to behave humanely, etc., and if the intervention of “religious politicians” of every denomination could be discouraged, so much the better.

To be sure, this “modus vivendi” is not a solution, let alone an overall one

For, in the view of Torah, there is only one road open that leads to an “overall solution”—the road of “Teshuva”, of return to the faith and practices of the Torah. The task on which even the most Torah-true are concentrating too little and to which they should devote much more effort is that of spreading the belief and practice of Torah everywhere, in the State and abroad, individually, locally,

etc., and of aiding and supporting the genuine efforts that are being made both in the State and abroad to strengthen Torah-Judaism morally and practically. The bearing of Teshuva upon the "overall solution" of problems may sound too metaphysical to many but our own generation is becoming more aware of the reality and tangibility of the metaphysical connection.

It may be of interest, in this context, to mention a fact that deserves to be more widely known. About a year ago, a symposium was held in New York with the participation of America's greatest experts in the major branches of the "exact" sciences, i.e. nuclear physics, medicine, genetics, space-travel, chemistry, etc. The topic under discussion was: "The Next Hundred Years"; and this writer happened to be present. The panel, as indicated, consisted only of "exact" scientists, i.e. men whose field is the laboratory, the telescope, etc. It did not include a single representative of the humane sciences—no philosopher, no poet, no linguist, no historian and certainly no theologian. The panel, thus, was anything but "metaphysically inclined". Yet, there was one point which all participants seemed to re-echo, though unrehearsed: that the future of mankind primarily depends upon its *moral* strength, that the real problem of today's world is basically a *moral* one, and that all its other aspects, political or scientific, are only results and not causes.

I have cited this example to show that even the non-Jewish world is already beginning to realize the direct bearing which ethical values have on the physical shape of things—or, in Jewish language, that the relationship between "Teshuva" and the practical, down-to-earth future of the world is not merely a metaphysical theory but a tangible reality.

Thus, "Teshuva" is the only road leading to a feasible and genuine "overall solution"; and for Torah Judaism

there can be only ONE solution that is both real and "global", and that will solve all the many problems of our history of Galuth: ". . . and when there arises a King from the House of David, who learns Torah and obeys the Divine Commandments as did his ancestor David, both according to the Written and the Oral Law, AND HE WILL FORCE ALL ISRAEL to walk along its paths and strengthen it, and will fight the battles of God, he may be believed to be the Messiah . . . and he will reform the entire world to worship God in unison, as it says:" (Zephania 3, 9): For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent" (Maimonides, Hilchot Melachim 11).

. . . and although he may tarry, I shall wait for him every day, for he will come . . .

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